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“This transformative project will bring new energy, activity and, most important, customers, to New Park Avenue.”

– Mayor Shari Cantor

See story page 32

ON THE COVER

Gregory Woodwood, a Hall High alumni, will become the University of Hartford's sixth president.

Courtesy photo
See story page 10

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Courtesy photo

Monuments conservator Jonathan Appell practices the art of preservation

by Lynn Woike
Editor

From Jamestown to the Congressional Cemetery in Washington, D.C., Jonathan Appell's expertise is in demand.

Taught to make violins in the early 1980s; he then became a carpenter.

"It was a change thing," he said.

Change was to come a couple more times.

"I knew someone who needed to do monument installation and I looked into that and I started to get into that in the mid-1980s. That quickly snowballed and I got into a whole new business which was modern monument installation," he said.

As a subcontractor, Appell installed some monuments on town

greens and in front of buildings, but mostly he was getting cemetery work, installing monuments and digging graves. The work was as steady as it was demanding.

"I got into the historic stones because, like a lot of things, it presented itself," he said, explaining, "I was already working in the modern areas and I was doing a lot of the monument installation. I would also have to do restoration of vandalism or if a tree fell on a stone, and so I ended up working on some old stones sometimes."

While he was good handling heavy weights and modern stones, the old monuments presented different issues. Both his parents were professors, so he was accustomed to

turning to books before the Internet existed; he began to research historic masonry and learned how to restore everything from broken headstones to small mausoleums.

"I joined organizations that were relevant and I traveled and went to workshops and events that were interesting to me or that I thought would be helpful to learn more. It was an evolution. It didn't happen overnight."

Then, about 2000, he got out of new work, devoting all his time to restoration and preservation.

The next two months will take him to Arkansas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Iowa, Illinois, Massachusetts and New York City.

"I travel all over America. I do more things far away than near

home," he said in a phone interview from Savannah, Georgia where he was about to give a presentation earlier this spring. "I leave for long periods of time intermittently. I've been away for many, many weeks at a time sometimes."

In early April was such a trip, beginning with Jamestown, the oldest archeological site in America, where he was hired to free a gravestone that was sunk into concrete in 1905.

He gives lectures, seminars and hands-on workshops, teaching people how to deal with leaning, fallen, broken, sunken, eroded and deteriorated stones.

"We can't fix everything all the time, and erosion and weathering of the material is the most problematic.

In some situations, there's nothing you can do to help that, but other than that, most things can be fixed. So it's knowing what to do, what order to do it in, having the right tools to do it with – and materials. So it's a process. It's really like a trade. It's a very unique trade that pulls components from many other trades."

He travels nationally to teach what he knows, including at state historic preservation conferences, municipalities, in cemeteries with staff, at Native American sites and with anyone who wants to learn.

"There was no one source for many of the materials and supplies that I use and for many years, I, as well as the students I would teach who would want to go on and do the work, had to order things from many different sources and also, many times the companies didn't even want to sell them the things because they were buying small amounts," Appell said.

"I have brought everything under one roof and also offer advice. We seek out all the best

products possible, based on my own experience."

The company is called Atlas Preservation Inc.; it's located in Southington only because a suitable location did not present itself in West Hartford.

This company, that sells products related to the business, has Appell working with his twin sons.

"They are really running that business along with me and in my absence. We have a lot of products," he said.

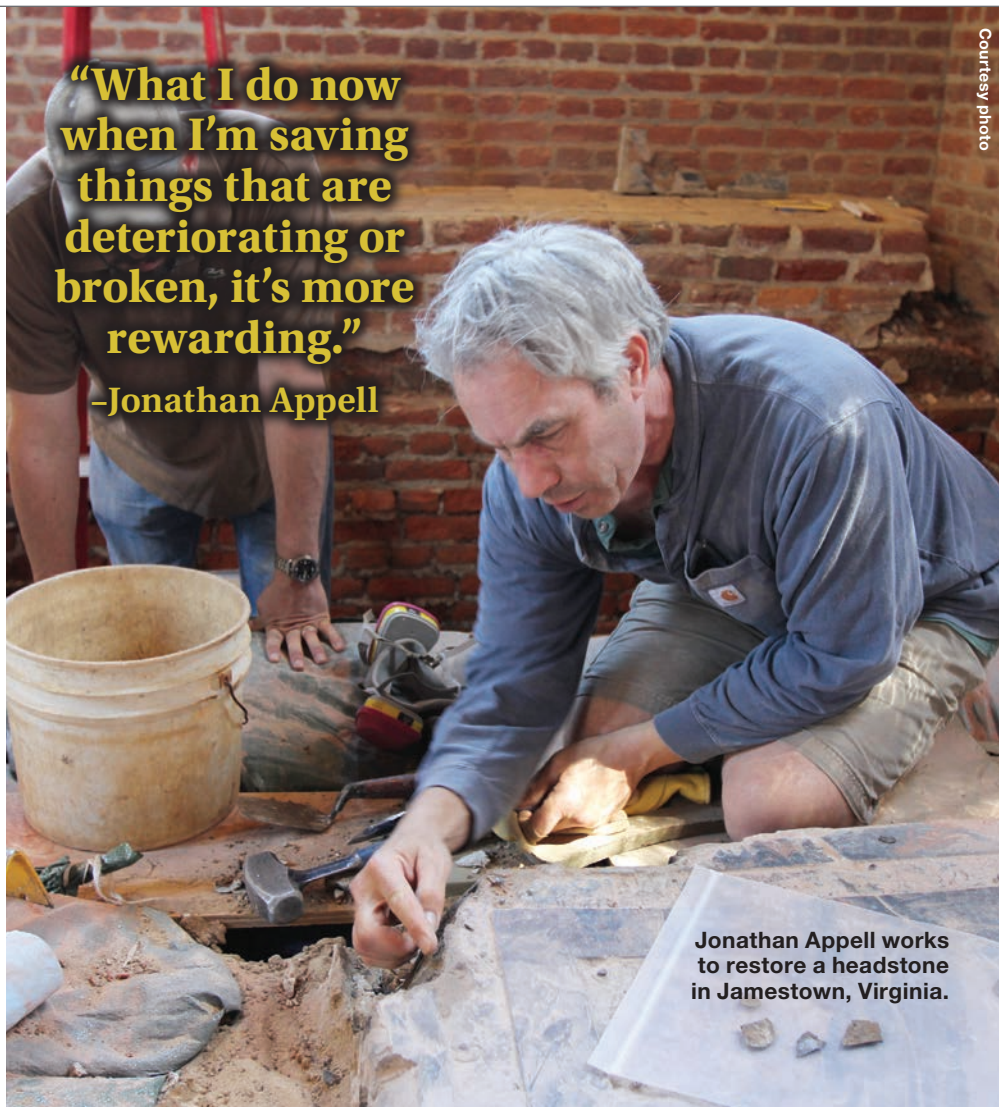
He sees his future more in training and product sales than actual hands-on work.

The single biggest problem is that people try to fix old stones with modern materials when "historic materials are different than modern materials," he said, noting that taking that approach leads to bigger issues.

"Generally, people try to fix everything with Portland cement mortar that's easily available everywhere. Generally, that material is not compatible with historic materials. There are some

"What I do now when I'm saving things that are deteriorating or broken, it's more rewarding."

–Jonathan Appell



Jonathan Appell works to restore a headstone in Jamestown, Virginia.

Courtesy photo



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exceptions, [but largely] it causes a lot of future problems," he said.

When you're conserving artifacts, "you should try to do things that are reversible if possible or at least not do things, certainly, that are detrimental, or are impossible to undo later."

For instance, when you put soft weathered marble in hard concrete, it's never going to come out again, usually, so you're diminishing the object, making it so it's probably going to break again. The most common and most difficult cases are "often times impossible to reverse."

Chemical treatments permeate the stone like a sponge and cannot be removed.

"Many well-intentioned treatments and cleanings actually have caused more harm than good. This is not limited to gravestones by any means. This carries over to big monuments, but also structures. There's more knowledge and training available relative to architecture than there is to gravestones," Appell said.

Comparing erecting new stones with saving old ones, he said, "What I do now when I'm saving things that are deteriorating or broken, it's more rewarding."

He's done little work in his hometown of West Hartford, but he has done a lot of work in Wethersfield and Glastonbury – two towns with ancient burial grounds.

But it was in West Hartford he began on this career path.

"Damien ['Dom'] Volpe – he was the one who originally got me involved and the reason was because he was a friend of my father-in-law and so he needed someone to do his monument installations. He was a civil engineer who changed career paths and became a monument company after he had a bad experience trying to find a monument for his parents and researched the subject matter and then started a business on the side. Once it started doing well, he stopped being an engineer and just

became a monument company. They're still in business on Reed Avenue. He passed away a couple of years ago and now his daughter runs it – Michele Volpe."

"Jonathan is a very gifted, very talented person. He is very meticulous. He was great at what he did for us," she said.

"If it were not for Dom Volpe," Appell said, "I would never have gotten into the cemeteries. At that time I was working as a carpenter and I'm sure I would have kept doing that – going on to build custom houses, perhaps for the rest of my life."

Rather, the talents he acquired from his multiple professions came together as he carved out a unique niche.

"I was warned by some people at the time that it was a big mistake and I'd regret it, but I've never regretted it. I never looked back. Never for one moment did I regret that decision." **WHL**

For more information, visit gravestoneconservation.com.



Courtesy photo

Gravestone cleaning: what not to do

The most-asked question Jonathan Appell gets about historic gravestones is how to clean them. While there is no one right answer, the first rule is to use the gentlest means possible. Cleaning efforts have defaced or destroyed weak and fragile stones, so he recommends leaving highly deteriorated gravestones alone, and if in doubt, do nothing.

The following should never be used on aged tombstones:

- Pressure washers
- Acids or acid-based solutions
- Abrasives, especially sand blasting
- Metal or wire brushes
- Bleach or any other household cleaners

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LIFE long ago

Sewers, health services and surplus property were topics during May through history

by Lynn Woike
Editor

In the bound volumes at the back of a vault in the town clerk's office are thousands of pages of minutes from meetings and public hearings that have shaped West Hartford into the town it is today. Here are some snapshots from May through the years.

120 years ago: 1897

About 20 people attended a special meeting of the Selectmen and Sewer Commission May 7 in the East School House to discuss

sewers in various parts of town. The committee had inspected the filtration system used in Bristol and found the sand worked well, but it was thought West Hartford did not have ground suitable for such a system, so terms were being discussed with Hartford.

At another special meeting May 21, with a dozen people present, the sewer commission voted to enter a contract with Hartford to connect with its sewer system for \$10,000. It was reported that another \$8,000 was needed to

Veterans Memorial Skating Rink opened in 1968.

Photo from the collection of the Noah Webster House and West Hartford Historical Society

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Beach Park School opened in 1926 and was closed in 1973. The land was sold to what is now the University of Saint Joseph, which renovated it and added on, then opened its School for Young Children there in 1999.

enlarge sewers in other areas of town. The matter of the town paying for electric lights on Prospect Avenue south of Farmington Avenue was discussed.

110 years ago: 1907

On May 4, selectmen and commissioners decided to limit the area of the proposed Trout Brook Valley Sewer District to a total of about 950 acres, 130 of which were in Elmwood. After much discussion, three assessments were adopted, ranging from \$25.74 to \$154.44 per acre depending on the class of land on which the trunk line would be laid. Opposition showed up at the May 11 meeting and after three hours, no agreement was reached regarding the right of way.

On May 13, selectmen and commissioners voted to allow Swen Nelson \$6 for eight hens killed by a dog and to give Mrs. William Hayes \$8 for three geese killed by a strange dog. Bridget O'Byrne, whose husband

was killed on the railroad and who has two children, asked that her taxes be reduced by \$10. Her request was granted.

It was voted to allow the Hartford Electric Light Co. to set a pole on Highland Street.

A jury list of 32 names was also adopted.

100 years ago: 1917

On May 7, selectmen and commissioners approved the payment of bills including \$6.25 to Oakdale Dairy Farm for damages, \$4,833.42 to S.L. Root for payrolls and \$68.60 to James Livingston for janitor services. Bids were opened for bridges on Park Street and Still Road; all were rejected for exceeding the appropriation.

The Board of Finance voted May 10 that \$2,000 be granted from the contingent fund to a committee consisting of George W. Staples, S. Leonard Root, Mrs. R.S. Cruttenden, Prescott A. Sears, W.H. Hall and

W.B. Spencer to be known as the West Hartford Gardens Committee. It was for the purpose of increasing the production of food crops in West Hartford during the 1917 season, with the understanding that not less than \$1,500 would be returned to the town, together with a full report of all transactions, on or before December 1.

At a May 21 meeting of selectmen and commissioners, temporary quarters were found for the post office until a new building became available.

75 years ago: 1942

May 11, the Town Council filed communication from the YMCA declining the town's offer of its old library building as local headquarters. The director of public works was authorized to proceed with the construction of Talcott Road from Quaker Lane South to New Park Avenue. It would be 26 feet wide with a curb and gutter.

50 years ago: 1967

The Conservation Commission informed Town Council at its May 9 meeting of its "immediate concern for dwindling natural resources" in West Hartford, and was put on the June 27 agenda.

It was resolved that the town would provide all children of West Hartford residents attending local, private, nonprofit schools with substantially similar medical, hearing and dental care as afforded students in the public schools.

The council also authorized the town manager to execute contract with City of Hartford for public health services from July 1, 1966 to June 30, 1969 at a cost of \$10,000 a year.

At its meeting May 23, the Town Council authorized the acting finance director to execute a contract for the construction of a War Memorial Ice Skating Facility with the low bidder, Seymour Sard.



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25 years ago: 1992

After a year of renting out the town hall, the Town Council adopted proposed changes to fees and terms of its use.

20 years ago: 1997

Following a public hearing earlier in the month, the Town Council declared the former Beach Park School as surplus and expressed a willingness to lease to Saint Joseph College so it could expand its School for Young Children – one of two proposals received for the site.

At its May 16 meeting, the Town Council directed the town manger to work with Northeast Utilities officials to find out why there had been an increase on non-weather-related power outages in some areas of town, and what plans the company had to increase the reliability of its distribution system.

It also set a nine-month moratorium on applications for adult-orientated establishments.

At a meeting May 27, the council increased fees for sale of lots, interments, disinternments, installation of markers and monument foundations at Fairview Cemetery, North Cemetery and Center Cemetery; among others, the basic burial fee went from \$440 to \$525 and a child's flush marker went from \$200 to \$250

It was also voted to have the town manger determine the best way "to expand the town's highly

successful recycling program into home composting."

10 years ago: 2007

On May 22, the council authorized the town manager to purchase the Gemini Hub building at 30 South Main Street for \$300,000, making it the cornerstone of a wireless communication network for the town and schools with 66 miles of fiber optic cable. The fair market value of the property was said to be \$948,500.

Also at the meeting, the council changed "animal hospital" to "veterinary facility" in its regulations and permitted them in various zones, including arterial streets within residential zones by special use permit and eliminate kennels as a permitted main use in restricted areas. It also voted to appoint a five-member task force charged with developing a master plan to promote safe and increased cycling in town, and to have that committee report back within 90 days.

5 years ago: 2012

The Town Council adopted a resolution to declare 90 Raymond Road to be surplus, opening the way for a hotel to be built.

1 year ago: 2016

On May 10, the Town Council approved the Chick-fil-A application, and voted to purchase the University of Connecticut property at the corner of Asylum and Trout Brook avenues for \$5 million. **WHL**

Ten years ago, the town purchased this building on South Main Street that serves as a hub for the town's wireless communication network.



Photo by Lynn Wolke

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Coming home

Gregory Woodward is the new president of the University of Hartford

by Alicia B. Smith
Associate Editor



Courtesy photo

In December, Dr. Gregory Woodward returned to a place he had not been to in 40 years. He took a walk down Harvest Lane.

He strolled past his old house. He recalled his paper route.

"It was cathartic," he said. "It was great."

Woodward spent part of his childhood here, attending Bugbee Elementary School, King Philip Middle School, moving on to Conard High School for one year before graduating from what was at the time the recently built Hall High School in 1972.

This summer, Woodward will be coming home, perhaps not to Harvest Lane, but to the University of Hartford where he has accepted the position as its sixth president.

Woodward was born in Los Angeles and lived in Michigan before his family settled in West Hartford where he lived with his parents, Clayton and Vivian, and three siblings.

He lived in town during a

transitional period as the original Hall High School, located in the center of town, could no longer accommodate the town's secondary school population. Woodward attended Conard High School his freshman year before being transferred to Hall. His two older siblings graduated from Conard and his family moved out of town before his younger sibling graduated high school.

Woodward recalled playing soccer, one of his many loves, while in high school and the many friends he made.

"I had a great group of friends," he said. "We pushed each other, gave each other confidence. We had fun."

"What is really cool about West Hartford is you did feel like the town was pulling for you in so many ways," Woodward said. "All through high school it seemed every one in West Hartford loved their kids. What a great place to grow up."

It was in West Hartford where Woodward would begin to sow the seeds for his love of musical composition. He played clarinet in school

and took private lessons from William Goldstein, then the lead clarinetist in the Hartford Symphony Orchestra. Eventually, the draw of pop music inspired him to take up the saxophone. He also played the flute and drums.

Woodward played in a number of bands while in high school, which performed at dances and other events.

He was a member of the first class at Hall to travel to Europe with the jazz band and choir, a tradition that has continued at the school.

"In high school you find a niche, mine was in music," Woodward said.

Among his earliest influences was his music teacher, the late Donald Bornstein, who taught him clarinet. Some of his other favorite teachers include Mrs. Knox and Mrs. Beach, both of whom fostered his interest in learning.

While at Bugbee, Woodward recalled working on a project where students raised money to buy a star. He said the project was a "big deal" as he and his classmates raised \$500.

"What a great place to grow up, the support, the great education," he said of his childhood hometown.

"I am happy to be going back. It feels like fate," Woodward said of returning to Connecticut. "It was kind of surreal driving around West Hartford. It's changed a lot."

Woodward did not leave Connecticut immediately after graduating high school. He stuck around and attended the University of Connecticut, majoring in music composition and earning a minor in clarinet and saxophone. He continued to pursue his education in music composition, earning a master's from Ithaca College and a Doctor of Musical Arts from Cornell University.

"This really is the life. I spend my life around arts, music and young people, learning and experiencing those things. I went to college in 1972 and never left," Woodward said.

Throughout his career he would work in education in one form or another. He has served as dean of

the School of Music at Ithaca College and held other posts there as well, including teaching music. He also taught at Cornell University, was a guest lecturer at Yale University and an assistant professor of music at Valparaiso University.

Since 2012 Woodward has served as president of Carthage College, a small liberal arts school in Wisconsin, tucked alongside the shores of Lake Michigan. He described the school – located between Chicago and Milwaukee – as having an active student body that is about half the size of the University of Hartford. There are about 3,000 full time undergraduate students at Carthage, 40 degrees in different subjects offered, 120 student organizations and 24 NCAA Division III teams.

“Hartford is what I would call a comprehensive college,” Woodward said, referring to the number of schools that comprise the university, the number of majors offered along with the graduate programs, and online degrees.

“It will be interesting for me

to find ways to bring the best of Carthage into the Hartford experience. That would be the sense of unity, of mission and vision,” he said. “I do think Hartford has a fabulous mix of colleges and programs. I want to make the whole experience broader, more unified.”

He continued, “Young people today are going to have at least seven jobs in their life. We don’t know what they are. It’s always good to have professional development, a professional education. Also on the side, have a readiness for lives and careers that might go in all kinds of directions.”

Woodward’s goal is to enable students at Hartford to have as broad of an educational experience as they can, including opportunities to study abroad, study away from campus and work with faculty members.

He believes the university is a good size and does not envision himself increasing enrollment much. Rather, he plans to make attending the school possible for as many students as he can.

“I would like to be sure that Hartford is accessible to any student that wants to come,” he said. “They have to get in. Our academic standards have been increasing, at some point people earn their way in or they don’t.

“How can we do that? I love the fact that by some people’s measure, Hartford is one of the most diverse [universities] in all of New England; I would like to build on that. That would mean working hard on the achievement gaps of students from different backgrounds. Let’s fix that. There is not much diversity in the staff. Let’s fix that. Let’s be sure people leave with a reasonable amount of debt.”

Woodward envisions working to make students’ experiences as rich as possible with a focus on the success rate of graduates and the retention rate of students.

“If we admit a student to Hartford, I feel ethically and morally bound to that student’s success,” Woodward said. “I don’t want to see them drop out, overwhelmed by debt. Let’s make them successful.

“If we admit a student to Hartford, I feel ethically and morally bound to that student’s success. I don’t want to see them drop out, overwhelmed by debt. Let’s make them successful. If we admit you, let’s see you through to graduation.”

–Gregory Woodward

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“I would like to be sure that Hartford is accessible to any student that wants to come.”

—Gregory Woodward

If we admit you, let's see you through to graduation.”

Woodward is also interested in growing the endowment of the university to have a sustainable future and to offer scholarships and grants.

“I will say, when I interviewed for the job I was asked why I was interested. I said, ‘I see the potential of Hartford to be what I call the university of the future. The mix of programs it has, in the residential experiences it has, in the physical location and the

range of methodology they use – utilizing every possible resource. I think Hartford may be the kind of place built for long-range success. ... It's a pretty amazing place. It's hard for me to imagine a learner who comes to us where we won't be able to accommodate them. Carthage has a single mission – provide a residential education. It's a great mission, it's just different.”

During a tour of the campus Woodward said he visited some of its “nooks and crannies.” Among the places he saw were dedicated spaces for specific types of study, galleries with space for viewing art and performance space, space for research and two magnet schools.

“I am not sure people know that about Hartford,” Woodward said of what is available on campus. “I think we might be able to tell our story about the growth of Hartford and its continued rise to a place of excellence in a more dramatic and powerful way.”

Woodward recollected that when he graduated from high school, the University of Hartford was not

a school one would have given much consideration to.

“That is changing,” Woodward said. “It's been changing for all the years I've been away. It's on a trajectory where it is becoming more and more. If you want to do [it] and they have it, regardless of whatever your dreams are, Hartford can help you realize those.”

Woodward's academic work has left him little time for composing, although he has occasionally been asked to work on a specific piece. He looks forward to the day when he can get back to it.

The one area that has always been a priority for him is his commitment to community service.

He has served on the board of directors for the United Way of Kenosha County, was Kenosha's 2012 Honorary United Way Campaign chair, and was a member of the Kenosha Unified School District Community Partners' Alliance, the Kenosha County Strategic Visioning Process Task Force and more.

“I have a particular interest; my interest is to bring young people

who have a harder beginning, a tougher time in life than I had, to give them an opportunity. That opportunity comes in education, the future is through education.”

Woodward said that he would like to continue his involvement in community service when he comes to the University of Hartford.

He also has no intention of giving up his reading habit either. He described himself as a “voracious reader.”

“I read at least a book a week,” he said, adding that he often has three or four books he is reading at any given time.

Woodward will take over as president of the University of Hartford, replacing Walter Harrison, in July. He is married to Penelope Woodward, a public school music teacher and the couple has three adult children.

“I will say that going back and helping to lead the University of Hartford in educating other great young people that are trying to build great lives is just an unbelievable joy,” Woodward said. **WHL**

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Works of art

10 residents have their pieces exhibited at the NBMAA

by Lynn Woike
Editor

Ten artists from West Hartford had their pieces selected for the Nor'Easter: The 47th Juried Members

Exhibition at the New Britain Museum of American Art.

The prominent exhibition, running from April 29 to May 28 in the Stitzer Family Gallery, showcases exceptional work of emerging artists in all media.

The event drew 1,107 entries by 450 artists from 21 different states; 88 artists were accepted.

We asked each of them to tell us a little about themselves and their piece in the show.



Artist: Anita Gangi Balkun

Title: "Shoe Scribe 2016"

Editor's note: This piece was awarded third prize in the show.

Medium: Unfinished shoes, unmatched socks, antique parson's chair and poetry by Colleen Feeney

Inspiration: This artwork was inspired by the ever-present pile of unmatched socks in my house. Hopeful socks, waiting for the perfect match to reappear and take them out of their limbo state in the lost-and-found basket. The unfinished leather shoes and antique parson's chair pieces had similar fates until I discovered them.

This artwork includes collaboration with my former art student Colleen Feeney.

As I start to layout my ideas, I send Ms. Feeney images and

thoughts to inspire her writing, and she responded with her poetry. I then merged her words into the physical form of the book in a way that serves the artwork.

Background: I teach at the CREC Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts High School and have a home studio. I approach visual story telling through mixed media and sculptural artwork, employing sensory experiences to spark memory. As a collector of the commonplace, I reuse



stuff rescued from the scrap bin or second-hand store and transform it into unexpected forms. Education includes a master's in fine arts in painting from the University of Hartford in 2009, and a bachelor's degree in studio art from Central Connecticut State University. As a working professional, I participated in a mentorship critique, completed a studio residencies and was commissioned to create installations various events.

About art: Art is an active curiosity about the world around you. It fulfills, renews, deepens, expands. Art teaches you to solve problems, find patience, ask questions, learn confidence, listen closely, observe details, and connect hands to heart.



Artist: Evan Fable

Title: "Portals #1"

Medium: Cast glass sculpture

with a wooden pedestal

Inspiration: My inspiration for this piece came to me as I was studying mold making at the Haystack School of Crafts in Deer Isle, Maine. This mystical environment instilled in me a desire to want to alter time, such as Han Solo trapped in the carbonate – he was still alive yet in a state of limbo. This sculpture serves as a passageway between the past, present and future. I enjoy working with light and glass to create art that is not only sensational, but illusive and alluring.

New Britain Museum of American Art Director Min Jung Kim juried the West Hartford Art League's 10th annual CT+6 show.

Held every spring, it showcases work in all mediums. This year more than 500 works of art were entered from throughout New England and New York. From those, she selected 60 pieces.

"As a community art league, we show work by our members in our annual members exhibition every fall, as well by faculty and area artists on a monthly basis in our two galleries. CT+6 is meant to be our most selective exhibition," said Roxanne Stachelek, executive director of the league.

"As with all juried shows, each juror has his or her own outlook and brings their own set of rules to the table, so we alternate jurors every year, looking for jurors with a variety of professional backgrounds and tastes, in an effort to be inclusive of all styles of work."

Thirteen West Hartford residents had their work selected. They are:

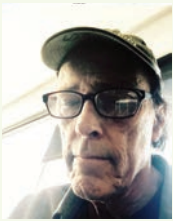
**Diane Cadrain
Sandy Chase
Carol Ganick
Lee Goode
Jeffrey Leitz
David McCary
Jo McGinnis
Sandra Meyer
Michael Moran
Naomi Nevo Ben-Ari
John Rohatsch
Roxanne Stachelek
Ana Webersen**

The Best of Show winner will be announced during the opening reception April 30 at 3 pm. The public is invited. The exhibit remains on display in both of the league's galleries until June 4. The galleries are always free and open to all.

Background: I grew up in West Hartford and attended Hall High School from where I went on to New York state and completed undergraduate studies at Alfred University. I focused my learning in an eclectic array of media – glass-blowing, ceramics, sonic arts and digital art – as I studied to become an educator. Currently I am teaching visual arts at South Windsor High School.

About art: Art has always been a way for me to express myself, and I strive to inspire our youth through teaching.

Inspiration: I am a contemporary artist who explores the properties of materials. The work in question was made when I



Artist: Peter Ganick

Title: "Waves of Color"

Medium: Ink pencils on paper

had just started in with Inktense pencils from Derwent. Trying out some techniques I came across this variation, and thought the title would fit.

Background: I have no degree in art, but have taken many courses at the West Hartford Art League. I work in

small pieces usually in the avant-garde genre. My father was a commercial artist in Boston. As a youth, I frequented museums there and traveled a lot.

About art: Art is daily work of the best kind.

Artist: Ann Hodgdon-Cyr

Title: "Woman In A Rocking Chair"

Medium: Photographic C print

Inspiration: I am inspired by the painters of the Renaissance and by the great sculptors of history. This piece uses that history and form to speak to the viewer.

Background: I am a lawyer by profession but have been a full time photographer for the past 30 or so years. My focus is the human form. The face and the body say something to my mind and heart representing for me the human condition. To me the face reveals or hides the inner person, the body strips everything down to basics, the surface of the flesh, the forms



created by the muscles and bones. I see these basic forms as a metaphor for human survival. The camera is my paint brush, with the finished canvas lurking in the dark room.

About art: Art is the best of life.

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Artist: Ilona Levitz

NOTE: Photo by Robin Fierston

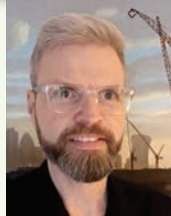
Title: "Hot Orange Horizon"

Medium: Mixed

Inspiration: For a while I have been trying to blur the line between abstraction and recognizable objects in my work. When I painted the orange horizon at the top of "Hot Orange Horizon," at first, I was taken aback by its boldness. Now it's my favorite part of the piece. The orange represents the abstraction of my previous work which makes the traditional elements in the painting seem right to me.

Background: Graduated from Vesper George School of Art, and taken classes at Hartford Art School, Trinity College and the Wesleyan University graduate program. I teach a masterclass for advanced painters at the West Hartford Art League, and have curated museum and gallery exhibits.

About art: Art, music, poetry and prose are what make life joyful and challenging.



Artist: Tim Murphy

Title: "800 Pound Gorilla"

Medium: Oil on canvas

Inspiration: This series of paintings' subject matter started with me looking at my son's toys. I noticed that when he was done playing with his toys, sometimes they would be left set up in interesting looking narratives. I began adjusting these found groups into thought-provoking combinations. In this composition, the large gorilla seemed foreboding next to the smaller smiling

figures. This brought to mind the saying about an 800-pound gorilla, one that is dominating or uncontrollable because of its great size or power. The double image style references how digital images are easily duplicated and shared, and that now to see a single original image is rare. Because of the rarity I created this piece as a stereoscopic painting. When the duplicate images in the painting are overlapped by the viewer crossing their eyes and focusing, the figures become one 3D image, creating a single original image.

Background: Some of my earliest memories have to do with drawing.

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I have always felt comfortable creating. As a teenager I decided to go to a regional high school in Massachusetts to learn illustration and design. I also received my bachelor's in fine arts from Massachusetts College of Art and Design in Boston, and my master's in fine arts from the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. I have taught art and design on the college level at [a few places including, locally,] the University of Hartford.

About art: Art enables me to help other people see things differently, change their perspective, alter their realities, sometimes achieve another state of awareness.



Artist: Tatyana Nadgor

Title: "Tete-a-Tete"

Medium: Oil



Inspiration: It's all about one-on-one conversation with God. We all have more questions than answers. We all "play" our little parts on a stage of daily human performance. I hope we are playing our roles to the best of our abilities thinking of future generations to come.

Background: I am a self-taught artist. Always loved art and museums since I remember myself, but never thought that one day I will start to paint. After seeing Grandma Moses' exhibition at NBMAA a few years ago, I decided to give it a try. I think I like to challenge myself with every piece I make. I'm never satisfied with my work. It forces me to paint day after day... I am not done yet. Dum spiro spero.

About art: Art is my passion. Making art is sort of breathing out my thoughts, my questions, seeking right answers. I can't imagine my life without art being part of it. I would be happy if someone appreciates my work and somehow connects with it.



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Name: Phyllis Small

Title: "Brown & Sharpe"

Medium: Fiber art sculpture

Inspiration: Some found objects, old tools from my husband's tool chest, and a new quilting technique I wanted to try

Background: I have a BA degree in chemistry, but have always had a passion for art. Now I am a fiber artist, combining my background

in collage and printmaking with the medium of fabric. I take my inspiration from color, shape and the beauty around me.

About art: Art is a way of expressing emotion or representing an idea in an imaginative and creative way, reflecting the aesthetic of the artist.

Artist: Carol J. Vinick

NOTE: Photo by Dominick Scaramuzzino

Title: "United We Stand"

NOTE: Photo by Tim Becker

Medium: Fabric collage and machine quilting; fabric for faces were colored with natural dyes such as tea, plants and wine, then hand-painted.



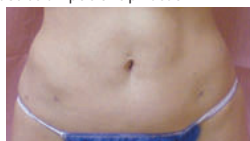
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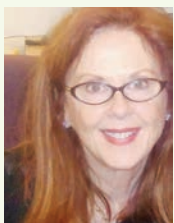
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Inspiration: This piece, after Bonnie Christensen's illustration in "Woody Guthrie, Poet of the People" (with permission), was inspired by Woody Guthrie's music and his life dedicated to advocating for the workers.

Background: With a background in sewing and traditional quilting, and no formal art training, my enchantment with the colors and textures of the fabrics I was working with transformed me into a fiber artist.

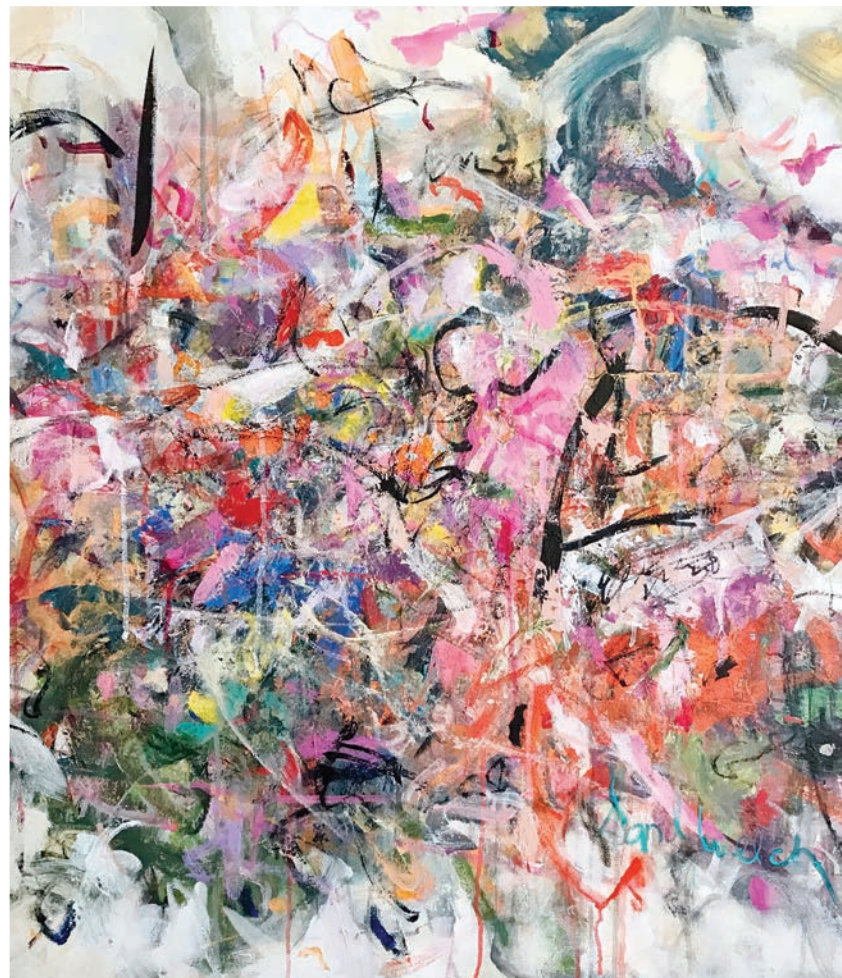
About art: Art is the place I go where I feel timeless.



Artist: Sandy Welch

Title: "I Love You Joan Mitchell"

Medium: Acrylic, ink and crayon



Inspiration: Joan Mitchell is one of my very favorite artists. She has inspired me for years ... I never tire of looking at her glorious work. She is one of the preeminent painters of the Abstract Expressionist episode in American art.

Background: I attended The Cleveland Institute of Art. I am absolutely a professional selling artist. I am on several On Line Galleries, have shown in several places both locally and out of state.

About art: Art is not just a hobby, it is vital to my life. My art is a genuine desire to incite happiness, for me and my viewers. The most common reaction to my work is joy, and I wouldn't have it any other way. For me no medium is off limits. I work as a part time freelance makeup artist for Chanel, which allows me to flex my creativity while enhancing living, breathing canvasses. Painting is my pulse and each of my pieces pops with provocative color and flirtatious style. **WHL**



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This group of women has been walking Westfarms for more than 25 years, sitting to chat afterwards at Au Bon Pain.



Photo by Sloan Brewster

Mall walking

Westfarms offers a place to exercise

by Sloan Brewster
Staff Writer

Mall walking is a way to keep the blood flowing, but more than that, it's a great way to gather friends together.

On an April morning a group of women sat in Au Bon Pain at Westfarms, chatting and enjoying a bit of relaxation after a morning walk through the mall.

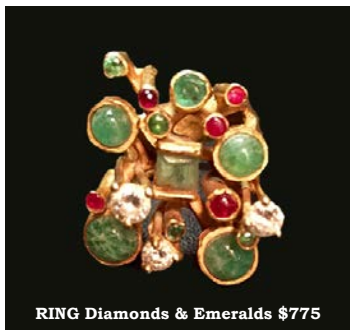
They fawned over West Hartford resident Patricia Heinze's fine lace-like stitching on a pearl-dotted scarf she was knitting, a few making excuses for why she should give it to them when it was finished.

The women, who are from towns throughout Hartford County, meet most mornings and have done so for more than two and a half decades. Most of them already knew one another before they started the morning tradition, but there have been new arrivals, too. They make new friends while doing the walks. Barbara Kielbasa, of West Hartford, is one example.

Over the years their numbers have dwindled, the women said, sharing a few memories of some walkers who have died.

"We used to have 20 people, some of them have gone to the big sky," said Gen

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Soovhaian, of Hartford. "We're all knocking at the door."

A 30-minute walk is a nice and easy way to stay healthy, according to Wendy Schrlau, director of Hartford Heart Walk for the American Heart Association. No expensive gym membership is required.

The association, Hartford Healthcare and Westfarms joined together to promote wellness, said Amanda Sirica, a Westfarms representative.

"Really what we're trying to impress upon people is the importance of physical activity and moving and that doesn't have to be 30 minutes at the gym or an hour at the gym or intense activity," she said. "It could simply be lacing up their sneakers and taking a walk."

The mall is open at 7 a.m. every morning to let mall walkers in before stores open, said Judy Caturano, Westfarm's marketing and sponsor specialist.

"We have a group of about 400 walkers that all come at various times during the day," she said.

Walking completely around the upper level of Westfarms mall, including all corridors, is .76 miles or 1,520 steps, Sirica said. The lower level is a tad shorter: .72 miles or 1,440 steps.

There are waves of walkers that come in at different times, with the retired walkers coming early and

mothers pushing strollers coming a bit later, the women said. Some mall walkers walk between five and seven times a week and become very close knit, forming bonds and watching out for one another.

"When a mall walker doesn't show up they worry about them," Sirica said.

One particular group is all men who became friends while walking together and found out they had all worked at the same machine shop in their younger days, a fact that drew them even closer together.

The two younger men learned that the older member, a man in his 90s, did not have a Life Alert button, Caturano said. This worried them.

"The other two decided to have an intervention," she said. "They sat him down and talked. It convinced him to get one and hopefully he will never have to use it."

Caturano, who has been in her position for 16 years, said she gets to know the groups and frets about folks when they are absent or she knows someone has a surgery or medical procedure scheduled.

"I get wrapped up in their lives, too," she said.

Some of the walkers come to the mall after helping get their grandchildren on the school bus or leave in waves to get them out of half-day kindergarten, she said. Some stay to do some shopping after walking. Some

bring their young grandchildren for a few years until they begin school, Caturano said, recalling one little girl she watched grow up.

Tammy Rothschild of Cromwell said she was planning to start bringing her 3-year-old grandson, Nolan Rothschild.

"I just started walking a couple weeks ago," Rothschild said. "It just seems like a warm, safe place to get some exercise and I started saying to myself, 'You know I'm really not getting any younger.'"

Rothschild has also made other recent health changes, including quitting smoking a year ago and adding yoga to her routine. She said she was inspired to mall walk by her sister, who added walking into her life after a medical emergency.

"She was a huge inspiration," Rothschild said. "She's climbed her way back to good health and she's still coming here and doing this."

Some perks to mall walking include that it's climate controlled and flat, she said.

Roxy Garabedian of New Britain, one of the women at Au Bon Pain, said she felt good after the walk, but each one in the group had a different reason for participating, not the least of which was camaraderie.

Garabedian, who has been mall walking since she retired 25 years ago, said it was about companionship.

"I do it because I don't want to be

"We have a group of about 400 walkers that all come at various times during the day."

-Judy Caturano

a couch potato," Kielbasa, who tries to get in three walks per week, said.

Soovhaian of Hartford said it was for fun.

"I do it because I have osteoporosis," Ruth Swisher of New Britain said. "I need to do some form of exercise."

Around the corner and down the hall in one of the many sitting areas scattered throughout the mall, another group of walkers unwound.

Like the first group, some were already acquainted before they began walking and some were later additions.

The clique starts at about 8:15 or 8:30 a.m., walks an average of two miles, sits and rests, and then goes for coffee.

"It takes me about an hour and a half," said Richard Bianchi of New Britain who has been mall walking for 24 years.

Walking keeps them active, he said.

It's also about seeing friends, said William Cararini of Berlin who has also walked for 24 years.

"Tired but fantastic," he said of how he felt. "We have to come here. It's a must." **WHL**



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Bringing together two loves

Former Board of Education chairman takes on new professional role

by Abigail Albair
Executive Editor

Bruce Putterman is combining two of his passions in one as he takes on a new role as chief executive officer and publisher of The Connecticut News Project.

Putterman is known in West Hartford for his years of service on the Board of Education from 2003 to 2015, including as the governing body's chairman from 2011 to 2014.

For the last decade and a half, he ran a West Hartford-based consulting practice with a focus on strategic planning and marketing for primarily nonprofit organizations, advocacy groups and public agencies, though he also did some work in the private sector.

That experience, combined with a love of journalism that extends back to his college days, made him well-suited for his new role at CNP, a nonprofit online publisher of The Connecticut Mirror, which covers state and federal government, public policy and politics, along with its sister sites TrendCT and CT Viewpoints.

"Connecticut residents can depend on the CT Mirror to keep them informed, making government and policymaking more transparent," Ulysses B. Hammond, CNP's board president, said in an announcement that appeared on The Connecticut Mirror. "To be accountable to our mission and audience, this means

CNP needs to be agile and cutting edge. Our board was very impressed by Bruce's leadership skills, record of innovation, business experience, collaborative style, and knowledge of Connecticut. His combination of skills is just what we need to advance our mission."

Putterman has been diving into his new job in recent weeks while he simultaneously wraps up his consulting work.

He said his focus will be first listening and learning, then planning, and then taking any needed action.

"I'm really trying to focus on just getting to know staff, getting to know funders, getting to know readers and where they want to see the Mirror go," he said. "It's just been really exhilarating."

Putterman said he wasn't "actively looking" for a new job, but he has always been receptive to new opportunities over the years, and he felt this one was a right next step for him in his career.

After obtaining a B.A. in history and an M.B.A. in marketing from Cornell University, Putterman began his career in advertising in New York before moving to Connecticut in the early '90s to marry his wife, Teri Bayer. He worked for a few marketing firms before going into business for himself in 2000.

Over the years, he helped facili-



Courtesy photo

Bruce Putterman served as the Board of Education chair in West Hartford for three years of his tenure from 2003-15. He recently took on the new role of CEO and publisher of The Connecticut News Project, the nonprofit online publisher of The Connecticut Mirror.

tate the development of a strategic plan for Hartford Public Schools and consulted with several disability services agencies, work that was of particular personal importance to him as one of his three children has autism.

Other clients included Hebrew HealthCare, Riverfront Recapture, Auerfarm and the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity at the University of Connecticut. He even did some marketing work for the city of Hartford and wrote the memorable



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"Things have been going great in my consulting practice. I have great clients, I have great projects, and I feel like I'm making an impact," he said. "It provides for a great lifestyle, working for yourself. But [the job at the Mirror] was too good to pass up. It's a dream job."

Putterman worked for in broadcast journalism for a brief time in college, but veered way from that path after graduation.

"I was always a student of journalism and always had tinges of regret that I didn't pursue it," he said. "Through my service on the Board of Education and being an advocate for disability rights, this idea of strengthening civic engagement and helping to strengthen the voice of the people through credible information was really interesting to me. When I was on the Board of Ed, the best conversations and the best solutions emerged out of informed conversations about issues and that's the role that the Mirror plays in Connecticut."

The Mirror includes a professional team of eight journalists and a bench of freelance reporters. In today's political climate and the era of fake news, Putterman said much work lies ahead.

He hopes to use his marketing experience to be a "guardian of the CT Mirror brand," as one that is "fair, accurate, useful and relevant information for policy makers and all citizens."

"What excites me about taking

the job at this moment in time is we're at an inflection point in terms of the direction of the state, so information about how the state works and makes decisions is really vital. The integrity and reputation of the Mirror as a purveyor of accurate information is more important than ever. We've got people in Washington calling the media the enemy of the people and we need to be an advocate for the people," he said.

"This is a key moment in the life of civic engagement and the media and my hope and expectation is we're going to take advantage of that moment to serve in the traditional, informative and watchdog role that the media has always provided."

He hopes to "keep an eye toward coherent management" as the Mirror develops new beats and increases its depth of its coverage.

Putterman considers this job to be the new way in which he will engage with his own community and the greater community that is Connecticut.

"People always say to me, 'Do you miss the Board of Ed?' and I say, 'It was a great experience, but I don't miss it,'" he said.

He enjoyed the connection the board brought him to the school system and the work he was able to do, but he never had a desire to pursue higher office, he said.

As a parent of a child with autism, advocacy was always paramount for him.

"It made me a lot more of a tolerant person, I think," he said. "All your

kids give you joy, but the joys that you get from your child with autism are different and very special."

The special needs community, and the West Hartford community in general, were supportive of his family over the years, and he said the connections made by he and his wife and children – the youngest of whom is a senior at Hall High School this year – will keep them based here.

"I love West Hartford," he said. "It's a great place to raise a family. We're going to be here forever because our son needs community support and this is where he knows."

In his free time, Putterman belongs to a Jewish men's book club, and he said he started utilizing the extra time he gained when he left the Board of Education to exercise and cook more.

"I cook a lot more than just putting a chicken breast on a pan now. I mean, I actually cook, and I get to the gym a lot," he said with a smile.

Some of that free time may dwindle as he delves into his new responsibilities and moves forward.

"The reason the Mirror was born is still as relevant today as it was several years ago," he said.

"Traditional newspapers or sources of information had less and less capacity to cover state politics, policy making, governments and that watchdog role. My job is to sustain and build on that. It's nothing short of strengthening democracy in Connecticut and strengthening civic engagement." **WHL**

"When I was on the Board of Ed, the best conversations and the best solutions emerged out of informed conversations about issues and that's the role that the Mirror plays in Connecticut."

—Bruce Putterman

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Lumni LIFE

Pennsylvania Ballet's Kathryn Manger dances in George Balanchine's "The Nutcracker" – the show that made her fall in love with ballet when she was 7.



Photo by Alexander Iziliaev

Kathryn Manger is dancing with the Pennsylvania Ballet

by Lynn Woike
Editor

Seeing "The Nutcracker" made Kathryn Manger decide there was something magical about the ballet, and that being lifted and tossed into the air would be fun. With a dream of becoming a professional dancer, she began taking ballet classes when she was 7.

"As a toddler I was always dancing around, never sitting still," she said.

Shy and quiet while at Conard High School, Manger is now on stage for a third year with the Pennsylvania Ballet. She said she got good grades in her classes because she was eager, but it was studying dance at the University of Hartford with The Hartt School that was in keeping with her passion.

"What I wanted to do when I was younger was be a professional dancer. My mom was a professional

dancer with Hartford Ballet," Manger said.

After attending a full day at Conard, her mother would drive her to The Hartt School where she danced from 4-10 p.m. on weekdays and 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday. Every summer were professional intensives to continue her training.

"I do remember training for competitions, prestigious world-known events," she said, including

the Youth American Grand Prix. "I trained for that an entire year. The competition is held every year and I was among the top 12 finalists in 2012."

Twice she competed in the Connecticut Classic with the Connecticut Dance Alliance, winning gold in the senior division. The third time, she danced with a partner and took gold again.

Winning indicated to her that

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Kathryn Manger dances in Ben Stevenson's "Cinderella" at the Pennsylvania Ballet.

Photo by Alexander Iziliaev

she was good at what she loved, she said, adding, "I was really fortunate because these give opportunities to summer intensives and they give you cash prizes so you can put toward costumes or travel costs."

Dancing to train for a profession takes just about all your time.

"That's why if you're going to do it, you have to commit," Manger said. "You have to commit 100 percent so you have to love it, because you have to sacrifice a lot."

She sacrificed the prom and other school functions. She didn't have many friends outside the dance studio.

Dance makes enormous physical demands.

"Our body is our hourglass, so we have to make sure it's working and continue [dancing] while it still can. I have not had any injuries up to [last] year. I was always warming up well before classes to prevent injury," she said.

She also would swim, cross train and do a bit of running to build muscle strength and flexibility.

Then, she broke her left foot at work last November – "which was a big deal" – and was out for two months.

"Everyone says when you come back from an injury, you feel like you appreciate everything more; you're a smarter dancer; you're a

smarter person and you appreciate it more. I'm happy to be dancing again," she said, adding that the silver lining is that she feels stronger than before.

"I feel like I was born to dance and I really realized that ... more when I was injured," she said. "I sometimes don't feel my legs; I'm in another space; I just go for it ... listening to the music and it's guiding you and it feels like you're on another planet. It's a really special feeling."

"I would say the best thing about what I do is the opportunity to be able to perform for people and express what we are feeling or to portray a character we can dream of on stage. We get the privilege to be in love, be betrayed, be upset, to die – on stage."

That time is short compared to the long, hard days of training and rehearsing that are sometimes frustrating.

"That's why you have to love and appreciate the process as well," she said of learning your strengths and weaknesses, and how you best learn and work.

She likes that you can interpret your role and make it your own.

"Artistic freedom, it's really the best feeling," Manger said, adding that she likes sharing that with the audience, allowing attendees to get away from the rest of their world

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"I feel like I was born to dance." –Kathryn Manger

and feel the emotions the ballet is portraying.

"It's something special we can share with them," she said.

Susannah Marchese, ballet master at Hartt Community Division Dance Department, was one of Manger's teachers and the two have remained in contact.

"Katie is one of those special dancers. She has been since she was a little girl. Not just because of her immense talent, but also for her disposition and clarity of thought," Marchese said. "Katie has always been an incredibly hard worker and her calm demeanor has always paid off. Katie has a natural, warm and light-hearted stage-presence, which suits her well. Katie looks to the future and remains realistic about the life of a dancer. She continues to seek out training opportunities and diversifies her many talents. It's been such a pleasure to watch her growth as a dancer and as a young woman. She deserves all the success she gets."

Manger sent her resume to some

60 places. After graduating high school in 2013, she joined the second company at the Milwaukee Ballet.

"In this profession there're so few jobs now, I was willing to go anywhere," Manger said, adding that friends in Mexico and Japan are noticing the same thing.

"I just don't want to stay in one place for too long. I want to travel and see what else is out there."

She spent the 2014-15 season with the Minnesota Ballet, joining Pennsylvania Ballet as an apprentice for the 2015-16 season and getting promoted to Corps de Ballet for the 2016-17 season.

Among the ballets she's performed in are "Coppelia" (Swanhilda), "The Nutcracker" (Sugar Plum Fairy), "Don Quixote" (Kitri) and "Clowns and Others" (Balloon Girl).

"I'm 5 feet 1 inch. I have a small frame and stature," Manger said. "So growing up I was always made aware of my height.

As a dancer, it's good to be



Photo by Alexander Iziliaev

Pennsylvania Ballet
Corps de Ballet
Member Kathryn
Manger and Jermel
Johnson of the
Pennsylvania Ballet
perform in George
Balanchine's
"The Nutcracker."

small, but not so small. It's very difficult when you're so small in this career. Being my size and having made it, I feel proud of myself."

She finds herself "dancing bigger" and expressing herself in an expansive way.

Her philosophy is to always give 150 percent, to "always work hard, never get comfortable, always push

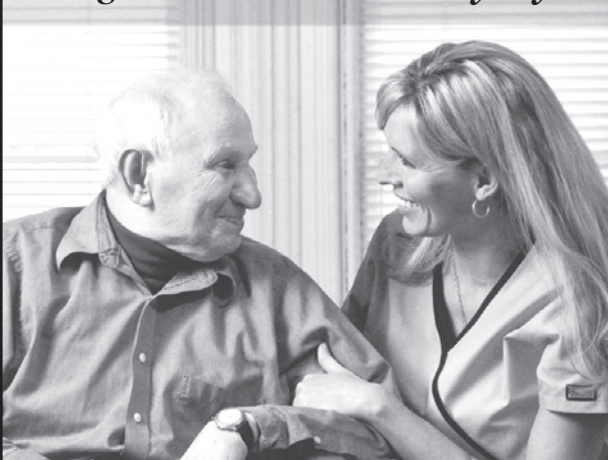
yourself and ... keep trying to improve and make yourself a better dancer."

Her workday is from 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekdays. Performances are nights and weekends.

Someday she'd like to dance in Europe.

This summer, Manger is returning to Hartford to workshop a new ballet with Marchese. **WHL**

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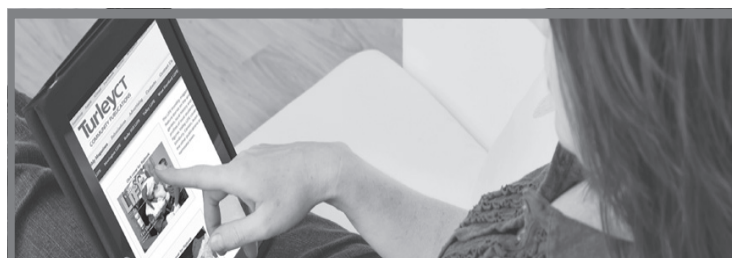
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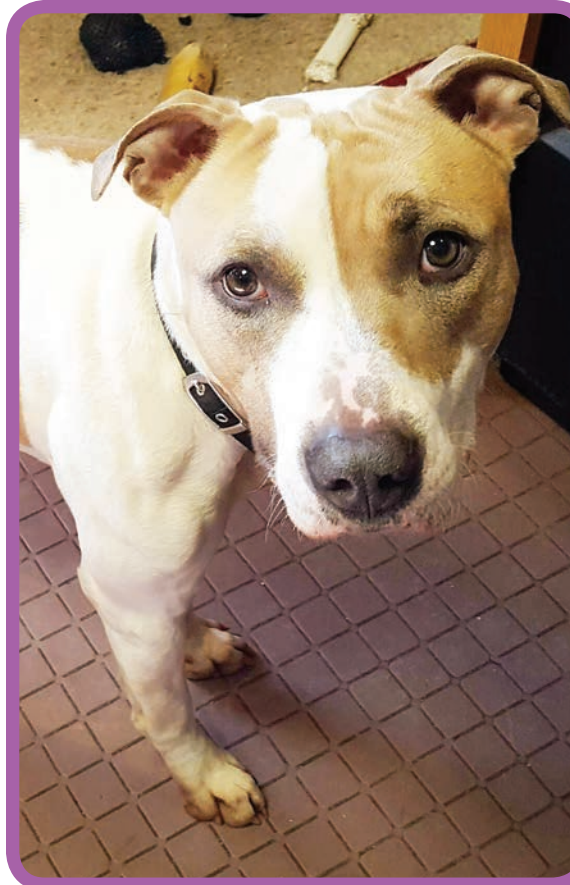
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Next generation New Park



Photo by Abigail Albair

Gov. Dannel Malloy lauds the success of CTfastrak and the transit-oriented development it has inspired during a "foundation setting" ceremony for 616 New Park Avenue, held in late March. On the left is a rendering of the new mixed-use, transit-oriented development currently under construction.

Zoning changes to industrial area allowed mixed-uses, breweries and now food trucks as corridor grows more vibrant

by Abigail Albair
Executive Editor

It may be in an industrial zone, but New Park Avenue will soon boast a bit less of an industrial style, and take on more of the eclectic flair that has been burgeoning in that area of town as transit opportunities and zoning changes allow for growth.

In the last month, local and state officials gathered to celebrate the "foundation setting" on 616 New Park Avenue, a new mixed-use, transit oriented development, and the Town Council approved a zoning change to allow food trucks in the area.

The well-traveled strip, bookended by The Corner Pug and Raymour & Flanigan, has long been known for being the harbor of the Home Design District – an association of businesses located in the one square mile section of town that all offer products and services to homeowners looking to renovate, decorate, repair, furnish or create a home.

That group has had continued success, even hosting collaborative

events to draw in hundreds of customers and celebrate the community.

Within the last 10 years, artistic vibes started to radiate from the 100-year-old industrial building between Jefferson Avenue and Darcy Street that was once a ball bearing factory.

The Shops at 485 New Park is now filled with a variety of businesses, many artsy in nature, such as Blaze & Bloom, Panache Consignment, Hello Dahle and others.

In March, the building celebrated the grand opening of a new and wildly popular business, New Park Brewing.

"It took us three years to open," founder and co-owner John H. Doyle said opening day, March 25. "During that time, we met a lot of people who loved our beer. We're totally blown away by the response."

Doyle and co-owners Tom Atkins and head brewer Alex Dee are all West Hartford residents.

A zoning change in September of 2015 allowed manufacturers of alcohol

to set up shop in industrial zones, where previously such facilities were not allowed in any zone. At the time, the town had received multiple inquiries from microbreweries.

New Park Brewing brought to fruition the concept that the town wanted to allow in the New Park Avenue area as a way to add to the section's vibrancy.

A previous zoning change in 2014 permitted residential uses in the general business zone and general industrial zone to allow mixed-use development on New Park, and now, another zoning change made at the end of March, will allow food trucks and food truck parks in the industrial zone.

"I think New Park Avenue has been going through a regeneration over several years now," Director of Community Services Mark McGovern said. "A lot of good things are happening there and it's really sort of picking up steam. We're doing what we can to capitalize on that and spur move investment in that area."

Recent investments, such as Cumberland Farms that redeveloped a blighted property or the opening of the popular franchise Chick-fil-A, have made a big impact, McGovern said.

"I think we're poised for even greater investment," he said.

All the zoning changes have been

to address an existing demand, he said.

"With the introduction of transit, there became a demand for housing, but we needed to tweak zoning to permit that. Brewing has become a really popular endeavor, and it's perfectly located on New Britain Avenue, but we needed to tweak the zoning to allow that. Food trucks is the trend but it didn't fit nicely with our regulations," he said. "We were careful in how we did all these things to make sure it would fit in. I think that sort of comes with an area that is changing and [New Park Avenue], traditionally, has been a center for manufacturing. Though we still have a number of industrial uses there, which is very important, there is more there now."

He noted that Colt Manufacturing, which came out of bankruptcy last year, has announced it will buy its headquarters on New Park and expand.

That is a positive thing for the area and town to have such a major employer based there, he said.

The increasing variety of businesses, combined with the brewery and now food truck availability, is solidifying the area as a destination

for those both from inside and outside of town.

"We have these new modes of transportation that can bring people, workers, customers, residents to arrive other than by car," he noted. "What I would certainly like to see is New Park Avenue to be much more like some of our other districts where we see people walking from location to location. Then it becomes more of a neighborhood than an industrial commercial district."

A foodie destination

The Town Council voted 8-1, with Republican Chris Williams against, to make the ordinance change that created different opportunities for food trucks to operate.

The discussion was prompted by an increase in local interest in locating trucks in town. Prior to the ordinance approval, the town had only the "classic ice cream truck ordinance," Corporation Counsel Pat Alair said, which allows trucks to stop only to serve patrons for a maximum of 10 minutes.

All the provisions contain language that restricts how close to existing restaurants a food truck can be, and all regulate hours of operation and other limitations.

One provision in the new ordinance allows no more than two trucks to set up and sell on any "local" street,

meaning the trucks can be in the New Park Avenue corridor, but not on New Park Avenue itself.

The ordinance sets formal standards by which food trucks can operate as an accessory use, specifically that no more than two trucks will be permitted per property and for no more than three days a week. Business owners must get a zoning permit and provide a parking plan to have trucks on site.

New Park Brewing was cited as an example of a business that may want to have trucks in its parking lot.

The ordinance also defined a new term – "food truck parks."

The parks can have no more than five trucks at a time, must comply with a variety of zoning requirements, and park operators must submit a plan for approval to the Town Plan and Zoning Commission, subject to the public hearing process.

Tate Norden, the co-owner of Iron & Grain Food Truck along with his cousin, chef Adam Belward, approached the town last summer about bringing a food truck park to West Hartford and, now that the ordinance change has been approved, they are working to submit a plan for one, called Gastro Park, in the coming weeks.

The New Park Avenue corridor was the area of town he had in mind for the park all along, he said.

"That was our desire and destination from the get-go," he said. "I was aware of the growth going on. I knew there was a brewery hoping to go there and

was aware of 616 New Park. I saw an opportunity for this portion of town that, for many years, was basically just an industrial area."

Backed by a group of investors, Norden and his partners are hopeful they can have Gastro Park up and running by September and draw more people to the corridor.

"We saw this as an opportunity that this is now going to become a much more exciting, vibrant and artistic unique sort of space that will make West Hartford that much more exciting to live in and visit," he said.

Norden is in the process of purchasing a just shy of one-acre site at 637 New Park with the closing slated for the end of May.

In formulating plans, he and his partners studied food truck parks from throughout the country, in both seasonal and non-seasonal climates, and crafted the idea for a park with a dedicated outdoor space where customers can dine from a variety of trucks on a rotating basis. In his vision, there will be an area for yard games, such as bocce ball, cornhole and others, and a craft beer bar onsite that offers craft beer and locally-inspired cocktails.

"It will be a local foodie haven to

celebrate all things Connecticut," Norden said.

A garage that sits on the site currently will be renovated to house a commissary and space for four to five trucks to rent.

"That way [food truck owners] can do all their prep in the commercial kitchen, load their trucks and vend out of the park or go to whatever location they have that day," Norden said.

His own food truck will be stored there.

"Iron & Grain is, for all intents and purposes, the first customer," he said.

His business was the inspiration to include the commissary because, Norden noted, many people start a food truck because there is a lower cost barrier of entry, but food truck owners still need access to a commercially licensed facility for food preparation and a location to take food

Beer at New Park Brewing is sold in 12- and 16-ounce sample sizes with 1-liter growlers available to go. Eventually, the brewery plans to barrel age some of its offering, package its beers and sell on a wholesale basis.

New Park Brewing opened in 485 New Park in late March to a tasting room packed with beer lovers. A 2015 zoning change made way for breweries in the town's industrial zone, something that local officials say adds to the vibrancy of the New Park Avenue area.



Photos by John Fitts



Photos by John Fitts

Mallory Kohlmeier and Eric Stagl brought their Yardbird & Co. food truck to the grand opening of New Park Brewing in March. A zoning ordinance change made by the Town Council last month establishes food trucks as an accessory use on a property such as the brewery, while also allowing trucks to park on local streets and do business in food truck parks, when and if a park is approved by the Town Plan and Zoning Commission following a public hearing process.

deliveries to be sure they are taking advantage of purchasing power and scaling the business appropriately.

"It's not cost prohibitive to start a truck but, at the end of the day, it doesn't end there and you need to make sure you can run a business the right way as efficiently as possible," he said.

The park will provide participating trucks with support of shared

resources, like the kitchen.

"The interest among trucks and consumers has really been astounding,"

Norden said of the park. "More and more food trucks are coming into the Connecticut scene every year, run by amazing chefs doing really cool and often times locally-focused cuisine."

His broader goal for West Hartford is that Gastro Park will turn New Park Avenue into a "great hotbed for local small business and development in town."

"That's really what we want the food truck park to be. We want it to be a small business ecosystem," he said. "Aspiring restaurateurs can use the Gastro Park to help grow their own business, whether proving out a concept or building their own food truck business. I would love to see that happen throughout all of New Park. It's

such a neat little spot with cool businesses already existing there. I think this can be the start of something greater for the area."

He noted the many businesses now succeeding in the area, including a variety of fitness businesses, UberDog and Hartford Baking Company. He's looking forward to seeing what retail comes to the ground floor of 616 New Park.

In his own business, he will continue a focus on local sourcing.

"We launched Iron & Grain thinking we could support farms, distilleries and other groups making local products because a community is only as strong as the local businesses that make it up," he said. "I think [Gastro Park] can be a very big draw, and draw on a whole other segment of people to town and to this area."

When the food truck ordinance was approved, Deputy Mayor Leon Davidoff said he was impressed by Norden and the "spirit of the food truck industry," marked by small entrepreneurs searching for the American Dream.

"Over the years our town has

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progressed, maybe slowly but we have progressed. We used to be a community where outdoor dining was looked down upon. Now I can't think of any restaurant that would want to locate in West Hartford that didn't have the option of dining outdoors," Davidoff said. "We're really building on what kind of environment, what kind of atmosphere, what kind of community do we want to create for millennials? That's our next generation."

Transit-oriented development

As the state marked the second anniversary of CTfastrak the last week of March, state and local officials gathered to celebrate a planned example of how the transportation network has served to foster transit-oriented development.

After years of effort, the West Hartford Housing Authority and Trout Brook Realty Advisors marked the foundation setting of 616 New Park.

The \$20 million, mixed-use building will be just north of the Elmwood CTfastrak station. The new development will include both market-rate and workforce housing units, along with 11 units of supportive housing specifically for veterans.

The first floor of the building is reserved for commercial use, with a tenant yet to be determined.

The property is meant to attract young, working professionals who want an urban lifestyle with quick access to transportation in a vibrant, walkable neighborhood, representa-

tives said, and many praised the fact that the project is indicative of the success of fastrak as a way to diversify transportation options in the New Park corridor and make it attractive to development.

"With CTfastrak, you could have or not have a car and get into the downtown of both cities. To me, it feels like Brooklyn, with its sense of urban sustainability. It's a place to walk," George Howell, the West Hartford Housing Authority president, said when plans for the project were unveiled.

The town has worked for many years to facilitate smart growth via

Hartford and 12 trains per day to Springfield, though West Hartford will not be a stop on the line until the local station is built, which is further off.

The town just recently concluded a yearlong study of New Park Avenue that was funded by a state Office of Policy Management grant.

"The emphasis of our study was the New Park Avenue corridor and ways in which we could improve it with a focus on complete streets and connectivity into, out of and through the [transit] stations," explained Town Planner Todd Dumais.

The challenge for the area,

are also encouraged, though Dumais said the actual changes will depend upon how involved the town wants to be in terms of making adjustments.

Steps could include creating an overlay zone around each transit node, making changes to the underlying zone or creating a new zone to impact the entire corridor.

The report resulting from the study recommends making changes in the areas around each fastrak station.

"The zoning recommendations are not heavy," Dumais said. "They're saying we need to preserve industrial uses and the Home Design District while creating new streetscape and landscape requirements that beautify the frontage of properties, screen parking and create smaller neighborhoods around the transit stations."

Dumais said the longterm vision for New Park Avenue is that it continues to become a more attractive, pedestrian-friendly environment with more mixed use development.

The town intends to continue to update zoning regulations and undertake complete streets improvements to facilitate creative development in the corridor.

"I think 616 New Park is kind of the pioneer for that potential vision," he said.

He hopes West Hartford can secure grant funding to make changes to the physical infrastructure of the street.

"That would be a dramatic improvement to reintroduce an aesthetic appeal and slowly start to see incremental change," he said. **WHL**

"We're really building on what kind of environment, what kind of atmosphere, what kind of community do we want to create for millennials? That's our next generation."

-Deputy Mayor Leon Davidoff

TOD and mixed-use development and to harness opportunities created by CTfastrak and the CTrail Hartford Line.

Design and environmental permitting for the rail line stations in North Haven, Newington, Windsor, Windsor Locks and Enfield, along with the Flatbush Avenue Station in West Hartford, is now moving forward as the state bond commission approved an additional \$50 million in funding for the project earlier this year.

The CTrail Hartford Line is set to launch next year and increase the number of round-trip trains from six daily Amtrak intercity and regional trains to 17 round-trip trains a day to

according to the final report of the study, is the "juxtaposition of the auto-centric corridor with industrial and suburban style retail uses, four lanes of vehicular traffic, no bicycle accommodations, and narrow sidewalks with the expected influx of pedestrians and bicyclists."

The preferred alternative resulting from the study is an approach to New Park Avenue that would essentially be a "road diet," or reduction in travel lanes, to make way for bike lanes, planted medians, new sidewalks and other streetscape enhancements.

Continued changes in zoning to support transit-oriented development



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The **MERCY** COMMUNITY

News roudup

by **Abigail Albair**
Executive Editor

Manager hired

The Town Council voted unanimously April 17 to appoint Matthew Hart as Town Manager Ron Van Winkle's successor. Van Winkle announced last fall that he would retire this July after 30 years working for the town – the last eight of which were as town manager – and a search for his replacement quickly commenced.

"Ron, you've raised the bar and held it really, really high and we really wanted somebody that would meet our expectations after working with you," Mayor Shari Cantor said.

Cantor, Davidoff and Minority Leader Denise Hall served as the search committee.

Applications were received from 25 candidates from 13 different states including 22 men and three women, Cantor said, explaining that Hart stood out from the bunch.

With a diverse background as a leader in fiscal and development policy, Hart has been the town manager of Mansfield since October of 2006, when he was appointed the third person to hold the post.

He previously served as assistant town manager in that town for four years and as assistant to the town manager prior to that. A veteran of the United States Army and the United States Army National Guard, Hart has experience working in the private sector and began his government tenure as assistant to the town manager in Windsor in 1997. During his tenure as town manager, he negotiated the development agreement for Storrs Center, funding \$30 million in public infrastructure without issuing any municipal debt. Under his leadership, Mansfield received awards from the Capitol Region Council of Governments, the Connecticut Main Street Center and the Government Finance Officers Association, and was also an Urban Land Institute Global Awards for Excellence Finalist in 2015 and named one of American City & County's Crown Communities for 2016.

During the interview process for West Hartford's new manager, Hart

not only understood the challenges facing West Hartford, but came in proposing solutions, Hall said.

"It's truly an honor to have the opportunity succeed Ron and Jim [Francis] and Barry [Feldman] before him, and really to have an opportunity to build on their service and their culture of excellence," Hart said. "I do realize that this is a challenging time to work in state or local government in Connecticut and that the town of West Hartford certainly has its own set of issues and challenges to address. However, with its diversity, its strong financial base and local economy, its talented and capable staff and its engaged elected officials and community members I think we are very well positioned to meet and address these challenges."

Hart will begin work July 31. His salary will be \$165,000, according to the contract approved by the council.

Local residents enter race for governor

West Hartford resident Jonathan Harris stepped down from his position as commissioner of the Department of Consumer Protection April 17, and, that Wednesday, he filed the necessary paperwork to explore statewide office.

He indicated in his filing to establish an exploratory committee that his particular interest is in a run for governor, though he said he left his options open and checked off the box for treasurer as well.

Harris said he had been mulling over the option of running for governor for some time, and had spoken with Gov. Dannel Malloy and Lt. Gov. Nancy Wyman since last summer about the fact that he would not seek the office if either of them opted to do so.

Malloy announced in recent weeks that the current term will be his final one. Wyman has not yet made an announcement, and Harris will bow out of the race if she decides to seek the office.

"I started maybe close to a year ago just trying to figure out where I'm going with my professional life," Harris said. "The consumer protection job really was the best one I've had ever. The subject matter, the people, the things I got to learn about, the impact I felt I could have on protecting consumers and businesses ... I started looking ahead knowing there was a deadline to this and I wouldn't have the job forever and thinking about

what I wanted to do next with the expertise I've gained in my life."

He said that, upon reflection, he realized what he enjoyed most about the DCP job was public service, which brought him to consider a run for higher office.

"I'm really excited to be able to have this opportunity because these are real tough times. People feel squeezed and I can understand why. Everybody, all families, mine included, have that feeling. ... I've been able throughout my career to not shy away from but directly confront controversial issues and bring people together to create practical solutions."

A former mayor of West Hartford and state senator in the fifth district, he spoke of tackling budget challenges in the wake of the recession following 9/11, and of strategic grand list growth that included the controversial process to bring Blue Back Square to town. As he looks at a potential run, he said he knows a focus for any candidate will be finding ways to help people live, work and retire in this state.

Another former West Hartford town councilor, Joe Visconti, also filed paperwork to seek the state's highest office as a Republican.

Development coming to Gledhill Nursery site

The Town Plan and Zoning Commission granted approvals in early April to make way for a new housing development on the site of Gledhill Nursery.

The applications for a map amendment and for an Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Permit were necessary for Gledhill Nursery, Inc. to make site improvements and construct a 16-home development.

The nursery building on the site and other structures will be demolished as part of the plan and 15 new residential units will be built. The existing single-family house will remain and be redone, according to the application. A total of 11 detached homes and two attached two-home units will be constructed.

It will be an "open space development," which Town Planner Todd Dumais said is meant to accomplish several goals, including providing recreational opportunities for residents in a residential neighborhood, enhancing the site, preserving areas of exceptional natural beauty, protecting historical or archaeological sites and preserving

wetlands areas.

According to Steve Temkin, the chief executive officer of T&M Homes and a partner in Gledhill Estates, LLC – the purchaser of the Gledhill site – the new development will include a walking trail, rid the property of invasive plants that have been encroaching upon the existing ponds and restore the wetlands.

"Rather than, let's say, 16 homes spread out over roughly eight acres where you might have a half-acre lot each, here you've got it clustered so over three acres is left as open space," Temkin said of the development. "For today's lifestyle this might be popular. People might not want a big yard to maintain, but will enjoy having this walking trail for the use of Gledhill residents."

Throughout that process, it was determined that the Dutchland Farms Windmill currently on the site will be kept somewhere on the property.

A typical house will be 3,000 square feet, but interested homebuyers have the opportunity to customize their house using options provided by T&M. The price range for a home will begin somewhere between \$600,000 and \$700,000, Temkin said.

"This is very exciting for us because this section of West Hartford hasn't had a 15-new home development in quite a while," Temkin said.

As a West Hartford resident, he said, "I've got a personal interest in making sure this job comes out great."

Garages 'go gateless'

As on-street parking in West Hartford Center did a few years ago, the parking garages in Blue Back Square will soon enter a new generation of technology when they "go gateless." Kiosks for parking payment have arrived in the garages. The new system will have a soft opening in May and June with a full launch July 1.

"We've been doing the analysis on the garages for some time now," Director of Public Works John Phillips explained, noting that the initial costs for the kiosks were incorporated into last year's budget, though operational planning continued and implementation was delayed to this year. "Longterm, the kiosks provide a lot of operational efficiencies, fiscal as well as back office accounting. It puts everything into a virtual world." **WHL**

Where learning is fun

Bringing children to local museums can be great for everybody

by **Alicia B. Smith**
Associate Editor



One of the favorite spots of children visiting the Noah Webster House & West Hartford Historical Society is the Discovery Space.

Courtesy photos

Kate Ebner, director of educational programs at the Hill-Stead Museum in Farmington, looked out her office window to see a couple of children outside having a blast rolling down the hill. It caused her to exclaim how much she loves her job.

For many museum curators, at one time the thought of having young, active, sticky fingered children amongst their collection was enough to cause much agitation. After all, children like to touch things, they like to talk, and they like to run – a mix that could have dreadful consequences for the antiques or priceless pieces on display.

While there certainly must be care and watchful eyes, much has changed for children visiting museums and several local museums are encouraging children to enjoy what they have to offer. Often they are allowed to touch things, dig in the dirt and run around, too.

“Nothing makes me happier than seeing young folks enjoy the museum and property,” Ebner said.

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Kids LIFE



Children of all ages enjoy learning about open-hearth cooking at Farmington's Stanley-Whitman museum.

She encourages parents to bring their children to the museum at any age, saying it is a great opportunity for them and helps them also learn museum etiquette.

"I really do believe the sooner the better," she said, noting it's a misconception that you shouldn't bring young children to a historical house. "They will learn, they will learn why eyes only and learn about the collection."

Visitors of any age who visit the Hill-Stead will find a home designed by Farmington resident and architect Theodate Pope Riddle in the very first part of the 20th century. The house has original furniture and is well known for its fantastic collection of Impressionist paintings, including those by Claude Monet, Edgar Degas, James M. Whistler and Mary Cassatt. Visitors can also enjoy the parklike grounds, including the

sunken gardens.

While it might not seem like children would have any interest in old furniture or art, Ebner said that is not the case.

Children come to the Hill-Stead to enjoy such programs as storytime, art projects and workshops for school breaks.

"Storytime is for ages 2-4; siblings are welcome. That is a lot of fun because we are making art projects, reading stories together and always make a collection connection," Ebner said. "Even as young as these toddlers, we are bringing them into the historic house and introducing them to bits of information on the collection."

As a way of making the experience more fun for the youngest guests, when they come for a story featuring teddy bears there will be teddy bears throughout

the rooms for the children to find.

The Hill-Stead also features an educational space for younger visitors, which they can visit anytime they come to the museum. The area is also used for specific programs or special events such as First Sundays.

First Sundays enable guests to tour the house and grounds at their own pace, a stop in the education space will be filled with craft supplies and there is music to enjoy. Young guests can also walk the trails, enjoy the sunken garden and visit the animals on the farm.

This summer the Hill-Stead will be partnering with the nearby Stanley-Whitman House for the first time. During the last week of their summer workshop, participants spend their morning at the Hill-Stead and the afternoon at the Stanley-Whitman House on High Street in Farmington.

This Colonial style home, built in 1720, is also fun for all ages.

"We are a pretty kid-friendly location," said Joan Zeisner, educational director at the Stanley-Whitman House, adding that the museum will purposely push furniture out of the way to ensure children who visit can explore as much of the home as they would like.

Young guests enjoy working in the garden and as they tour the house, learning about what life was like 300 years ago. Another popular part of visits are the characters guests may meet.

She has seen children have a

great time interacting with the museum's volunteers who dress up in period garb.

"They can be pretty convincing," Zeisner said of the characters.

Children can ask them questions and the characters show them how people cooked over a hearth or played Colonial games.

"The people we introduce to students really existed in Farmington history. They are playing a role we know them to have done in history, be it a patriot, a loyalist or a slave," Zeisner said.

"By learning and meeting these people it helps them to determine for themselves what happened. For me it's the best way for children to learn history, once they have the basics in school, then through the program they can decide for themselves."

Zeisner said some interesting discussions can develop between young guests and the characters they meet.

She encourages parents to bring their young children to the museum before they even start kindergarten.

"This is their heritage and it's becoming increasingly difficult for children and schools to learn history as we once learned it," Zeisner said.

In West Hartford, children can also have a Colonial experience when they visit the Noah Webster House and West Hartford Historical Society.

When young guests are shown what a chamber pot is and what it was used for, the common response



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“We like to share the riches that we know existed 300 years ago; the kids really do get pumped up for it.”

—Beth Sweeney

is “ewwww,” said Beth Sweeney, director of education.

Cooking demonstrations over the hearth get a more positive response.

As with other museums the interactive activities are a big hit. Here children can visit the Discovery Center consisting of three rooms that were part of the original house, which is now a hands-on area for children. Guests can put on costumes depicting the Colonial era, visit the pantry that is filled with imitation foods that colonial people would have eaten and there is a representation of the farm from what it looked like when Noah Webster lived there. Children can also get their hands dirty in the archeological dig area, where they can find replicas of items that were found on the site during an authentic dig.

Children also enjoy the street map that depicts the town roads from the 18th century and comparing it to the modern street map on display.

Sweeney said the museum offers a number of workshops throughout the year that are popular including hearth cooking and wool dying. In the summer, children can attend a Colonial camp, spending three days at the Noah Webster House and two days at Westmoor Park. The camp has been going on for 20 years and Sweeney often meets parents dropping off their children who tell her they attended the camp when they were children.

The museum works with the local schools and part of the fifth grade curriculum is to research a Colonial person and come to the museum dressed up as that individ-



First Sunday at the Hill-Stead offers a wide variety of activities for children.

ual. This living history program makes an impression on the students as they spend time in a Colonial schoolroom and learn about Colonial life, Sweeney said.

“They cook their lunch in that program; they learn about chores they did back as Colonial children such as mucking stalls or cutting wood, nothing like what they do today.”

Whether a student comes to the museum as part of a school program or with their family, Sweeney said they would get a taste of the past.

“It’s history and we are big history buffs here,” she said.

“We like to share the riches that we know existed 300 years ago; the kids really do get pumped up for it.” **WHL**

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Kids Voices

Editor's Note: This month, LIFE begins a new segment of our publications dedicated to highlighting the thoughts and ideas of our younger readers. In the pages that follow, students from West Hartford public schools were asked to share through writing details of activities taking place in their schools, as well as their perspective on their lives. Look for these pages every month to hear more "Kids Voices."

Bristow Middle School

Recent happenings

By Daisy Plocharczyk, Maddie Gamester, Niyah Davis, Kyla Henderson, and Vivian Hayward.

The last 30 days at Bristow Middle School have been full of fun.

Recently, Bristow put on the famous musical, "Fiddler on the

Roof." From roof-sitting fiddlers to gravity-defying bottle dancers to 10-foot tall ghosts, this production was one to be remembered. Eighth-grader Tobey Siegel starred in the role of

Tevye, and was surrounded by an outstanding cast and stage crew. All three shows were sold out.

All eighth grade students prepared a project for National History Day, which took place in late March. The theme was "Taking a Stand," and projects included such diverse topics as rights for the deaf and the singing Andrew Sisters. Fifteen students participated in the regional competition, and the following students participated in the state level National History Day competition April 29th at CCSU: Chelsea Licata, for placing first in the Individual Exhibit category; Leah Davis, for placing third in the Individual Performance category; Ananya Radhakrish and Sophiya Singh, for placing second in the Group Exhibit category; Stephanie Reuning-Scherer and Carolyn Alquist, for placing second in the Group Documentary category.

Seventh grader Miranda Scully

represented Bristow at the Connecticut State Geography Bee at CCSU and made it to the final rounds.

Can you spell "thaumaturge?" Do you know what this word even means? Well, you could ask seventh grader Madeline Gamester who made it all the way to the Connecticut State Spelling Bee.

Bristow's Model United Nations team participated in a local Model United Nations Conference at Kingswood Oxford School. A combined total of 16 sixth-, seventh- and eighth-grade students represented the countries of India, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan as they debated important issues of our time including gender equality, free speech and the ongoing refugee crisis. Eighth-grader Jackson Forrest won the coveted "Best Delegate" award for his group, and fellow eighth graders Chelsea Licata and Laurel Thomas won "Honorable

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Kids Voices

delegate” awards.

On the weekend of March 25, students from Bristow participated in CMEA's Northern Region Festival. They tried out for this honor in January, and after a very competitive audition process, the following young musicians were selected to perform with the regional groups: Thomas Tarutin in orchestra; Abhinav Aitha, Maggie Mieczkowski, Alison Pauluk and Daisy Plocharczyk in band; Martin Moran, Amruth Niranjana and Tobey Siegel in jazz band.

On a sports note, Bristow held its annual March Madness basketball tournament and the eighth-grade team of Colum Flaherty, Aaron Gruber, Christian Pedro, James McPhee, Evan Jones and Drew Currier won the championship! Let's hope they get recruited by the UCONN Huskies at some point in the future. We also had our annual advisory volleyball championships and crowned a winner in all three grades. The biggest news of all? The teachers finally beat the championship eighth-grade team in a closely fought contest! 🍎



QuEST success

By Ruth Hatch

In my QuEST class, we are attempting something no other QuEST class has ever done.

At my school, we have book buddies and other interactions with the kindergarteners and first- and second-graders. The QuEST team is very focused on the kindergarteners, especially this year. At the beginning of the year, our art teacher, Mrs. Stinziani, was teaching the third- fourth- and fifth-graders about the caves found in Lascaux, France and the phenomenal paintings in them. We all made our own cave “paintings” using chalk pastels and brown paper. They depicted hunts, handprints, and more. Mrs. Stinz, as we call her, wanted us, as the QuEST team, to create a display that the kindergart-

eners could see. We did so well that the kindergarten teachers wanted us to take it to the next level and build a butterfly garden. We accepted, naturally. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity! The team is made up of me, Ms. Cheryl Stidolph (a phenomenal teacher), three other girls, and two boys.

The kindergarten teachers supported us in our efforts to get our assignment done. We just had to write a grant to the PTO for the project. We put together a big proposal – let's just say it involved a tri-board and giant laminated paper butterflies – and the partial grant was awarded. The PTO was happy to give us some money that we could use to build a storage structure, plant an entire garden, and purchase butterflies. Aside from that, we needed to find some way for the kindergarteners to learn about butterflies, specifically the monarch.

So far, we have come up with stations that include playing a video game created by a QuEST member, and I Spy game created by me that uses pictures I took at the butterfly garden at the Smithsonian Museum of

Natural History, and an activity that teaches the kids about worms and their importance in our ecosystem. The reason for all these stations is to allow the kindergarteners to have a lot of fun using “visual learning” skills. We have discovered that most people learn best by seeing what they're learning, and that is the whole purpose of the butterfly garden.

We are still in the process of planting flowers. The cost of the flowers does not include that of the low-toxicity milkweed we need to plant for the monarch butterflies we are centering our garden around. There have been many discussions in our meetings about the budget, fundraising, and other matters related to money. This puts us under a lot of pressure, but we are positive that we can do it. “I wouldn't do this with any other group,” Ms. Stidolph says when we are feeling like it is a hopeless situation.

All in all, we are a good team, my QuESTmates and I, and we are positive that this butterfly garden is going to be the best we could ever make it be! 🍎

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Auer Farm fun

By Michael Soltis and Ben Kornbluh in collaboration with Aubrey Montresor, Bridget Dawson and Lucas Price-Glynn.

Our time at Auerfarm was awesome, especially the sweet potato waffles. Our whole third grade rotated through six learning activities. We learned so much about what happens on the farm.

Let's talk about the sweet potato waffles. They were sweet and healthy and 100 percent all natural. We all got to help make them, including cracking an egg all by ourselves. We smelled all the spices in the mix. Our favorite was cinnamon. Growing Great Schools Chef Rita helped us. Each rotation made the waffles for the next group to eat. We got the recipe, too!

Next we learned about maple syrup. One way to recognize a sugar maple tree is to see the V-shaped trunk formation.

When it first comes out of the tree it tastes and looks just like water. We know because we stuck our finger in the bucket and tasted it.

The machine that creates the syrup is called an evaporator and the finisher. You need about 40 gallons of sap to make one gallon-sized maple syrup bottle. We got to taste the maple syrup when we ate our homemade sweet potato waffles.

Another session we went to was all about bird adaptations. We saw a real chicken named Camilla, and we talked about feet, torso, size, shape, feathers, and how these adaptations help a chicken survive. We also compared a chicken to an ostrich and a roadrunner. We went on a bird walk and we saw chickadees. We trudged through the muddy paths in our boots.

After learning about Camilla, we went to a session about bird beaks, so we learned more about adaptations. We had a lot of materials that we pre-

tended were beaks: we had to stick tweezers into a log to get rice which resembled bugs and we used a long plastic straw with a plastic bubble at the top to slurp up water which resembled nectar.

We used plastic spoons to get leafs out of a tray filled with pond scum and we used scissors to get clay, which resembles teeth slicing meat. We used more spoons to get strings of yarn, which resembled worms.

It was important to know which kind of bird has which kind of beak so it can find and eat its favorite food.

Then we started working with soil and how the world was created. Did you know that the universe started with a bang and the first thing to come out of that bang were rocks that became planets and the soil and sand on our planet we call home? In our soil rotation we learned that the soil that has nutrients in it will cause water to sink in and makes it wet.

The soil without nutrients bubbles and falls off and does not make it wet. Our soil investigation showed that when we mixed the following: dirt,



Students cracked eggs during the process to make sweet potato waffles

water, clay, silt, sand, the order they turned out in when we shook them came out water on top, then dirt, clay, silt, sand.

Lastly, we got to go to a greenhouse that was 90 degrees hot, even though it was quite chilly outside. We got to use four out of five of our senses. We got to see plants, we got to smell

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Kids Voices

flowers, we got to taste lettuce, and we got to touch dirt and plant seeds. We also learned about the plants, which stands for Plants Light Air Nutrients Transpiration and Soil.

Auerfarm was such a great field trip! We loved going there. We even walked by the animals and got to see where they live! We wish we could have stayed even longer on the farm, and we hope lots of Duffy students get the chance to learn at Auerfarm. 🍏

Norfeldt School

The benefits of Unified Recess

Submitted by Mrs. Campagna's third grade students

Once four students from our class were helping out at gym. Then all of our class wanted to help

outside of our classroom. We came up with this awesome program, Unified Recess. We didn't know how awesome it was going to become.

The benefits of Unified Recess are that we get to play with people with special needs at recess. Students get to make new friends. It is awesome, meaningful and great! We love it! In Unified Recess, kindness counts!

Our class made a puppet show to get permission from our principal, Ms. Derick, so we could start Unified Recess. It was about our plan to show kindness on the playground. We performed the puppet show and she said, "Yes!"

Everyone has fun during Unified Recess. Anyone who needs a buddy has someone to play with everyday. Fun toys are outside for the friends to play with. We all make new friends at Unified Recess.

It is so exciting because there is a new adventure every day. Unified Recess is awesome!

We started a fundraiser for Unified Recess. We are selling mind-



Students take part in Unified recess.

ful bracelets and mindful bracelet kits. Our benefactors helped us raise over \$450! The money is going to buy

toys for Unified Recess. 🍏
See their video at
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Kids Voices

Aiken School The Science Fair

By Jake Zirolli, Juliana Fabas,
and Bennett Johnson

Aiken Elementary School just had its annual science fair.

It took place April 5. All three of us participated and had a lot of fun. It was open to all of Aiken's fourth-and fifth-grade scientists. This was a special science fair because it marked the return of Ms. McKay. She went into retirement two years ago. Now she is back to cover for our principal Ms. Mlodzinski, who is out because she is on maternity leave.

We welcomed her back and got excited when she got to judge. It was very cool. Most people worked alone on their projects, but some worked in groups of two.

Some other judges were Ms. Carter, Ms. Mckewon, Miss Young, Mrs. Collins, Mr. O'Brien, and our own teacher, Ms. McGowan. The McGowan representatives were the three of us, Cameron Thomas, Leo Sussman, Tighe Johnston, Sean Moleti, and Jessica Virkerman. A pair of judges came around to each project. They filled out a rubric for each project. We all got visited by Ms.



Pictured are the medal winners from the Aiken Science Fair.

Carter and Ms. Mckewon. Some projects were egg spinning, cleaning pennies, water erosion, and exploding soda at the impact of Mentos. The projects were amazing! Some people did demonstrations.

The judges viewed our display board presentation and tested us on the scientific question, background research, hypothesis, variables, materials, procedures, data and results, conclusion, and overall presentation. The highest total possible score was 100 points.

To keep the fair organized we had meetings every Friday from 8:45 a.m. to 9:15 a.m. There were many volunteers that organized the science fair. At the meetings for the science fair we discussed our project ideas, what the judges would ask us when they came around and what we would say back to them. We talked about the scientific method and what

we needed to do. The science fair meetings were in the Aiken School library, while the fair was in the cafeteria. The volunteers did a great job.

The PTO did a very good job organizing this event as well. Our own teacher, Ms. McGowan, was not only a judge but a volunteer for some of the meetings. Mrs. Millman and Jake's mom, Mrs. Zirolli were some of the volunteers. There was food and drinks on a table for all the people attending.

The winners of the fair were Bennett, Trey Dodd and his partner, Lila Wedeles, Ava Tringali, Max-Sena Goldschmidt, Irene Fotache, Madison Bromberg and Benjamin Puzzo. Everyone else got a blue medal which said "Science" on a gold banner. Congratulations to everyone for all their hard work.

This event was truly amazing and everyone enjoyed it. 🍏



What I want to be when I grow up

By Olivia L.

When I grow up, I want to be a librarian.

Do you want to know why?

Well, for starters, I would know where all the different books are and when there is nobody at the checkout desk, I might be able to read a personal book or a library book.

In addition, I love helping people, so when I show them where a book is, I am helping them in some way. The library is a very welcoming environment, so it would most likely not be a stressful job and it would be something that I enjoy doing.

This might sound a bit wacky, but I get excited to go to the library

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because with every book I read they each take me into a different adventure, whether that be mythical, realistic fiction or horror.

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Also they really do encourage you to read books. They will recommend books for you to read that are at your grade level and you can just ask them to order another book when the next book order comes in.

The thing I love the most about libraries and librarians is librarians are calm and work good under pressure. I know this because a couple of weeks ago some children were whining very disruptively. They were running around and you would think maybe the librarians were so calm they would not say anything, but she walked over to the kids and escorted them to the toddler section of the library because no one was there and she nicely told them to not make as much noise and told them to calm down a bit.

You see, the really cool part about that librarian is she is in charge of the situation but not in a mean teacher way.

I was always that type of student that buried her face in a book (of course only at DEAR and no other time unless at home). Although I love to read, I am quite social as well, which is why I like libraries because you can meet up with friends and do homework, read, play a board game or go on the computers or tablets to play games. There are endless possibilities.

I also recently read a scholastic news story about a library in Oregon where they let you take out toys and have a cotton candy machine. The reason is because they need more people to be coming to the library, especially adults, and if the item is expensive and you do not know if you want it you can borrow it for free. So maybe in Connecticut they will start to do that.

I hope you enjoyed me telling you what I want to be when I grow up. I enjoyed informing you about it. 🍎

Hall High School

Why I relay

By Lani Davidoff

Relay for Life has provided me with the most life-changing experience. In this club, we dedicate our time, during and after school, fundraising and raising awareness for the American Cancer Society.

As a freshman, I joined the club. There were about 20 students and our fundraising goal was a mere \$8,000. Although this may seem large for a small high school team, we managed to beat that goal and raise more than \$10,000. Three years later, now a group of over 100 students, Warriors for a Cure has set a goal of \$25,000, as last year we surpassed \$20,000.

Each meeting we begin with a "mission moment" in which a member of the team shares "why they relay," in other words, why they are a part of the team. Most students say that they have a family member or a loved one who has been diagnosed, survived, or died of cancer and they relay for them. However, I relay because I am truly inspired by the hope and unity caused by such a terrible disease.

The thought that cancer touches us all motivates me to reach out to the community and spread awareness, not only about the disease, but also about the people who are there for support.

This extracurricular activity has been so much more than just something I have to do after school. Rather, it has taught me how to connect with others and reach out for those in need.

Now as a captain of Warriors for a Cure, I am fortunate to be a leader of a group so

dedicated to inspiring others and fundraising for such a great cause.

For the last two years, a friend and I organized a trivia night. We contacted newspapers, arranged the questions, and organized the evening. Recruiting many helpers and players, we raised more than \$1,500 in one night in 2016 and more than \$1,700 in one night this year. Activities and events like this have had great significance in my life because they allow me to take part in and witness my fellow peers create not only a legacy in the school, but also one in the community that has a positive influence for future generations.

This year's West Hartford Relay for Life takes place Saturday, June 10 at Northwest Catholic High School. If you would like to make a donation to our team, you can stop by at the event, send a check to Hall High School Warriors for a Cure or donate online by finding our local relay and team at relay. acevents.org. 🍎



Lani Davidoff and Abby Niranjani promote the Hall High School Relay for Life team Warriors for a Cure. Relay for Life of West Hartford takes place June 10 this year.



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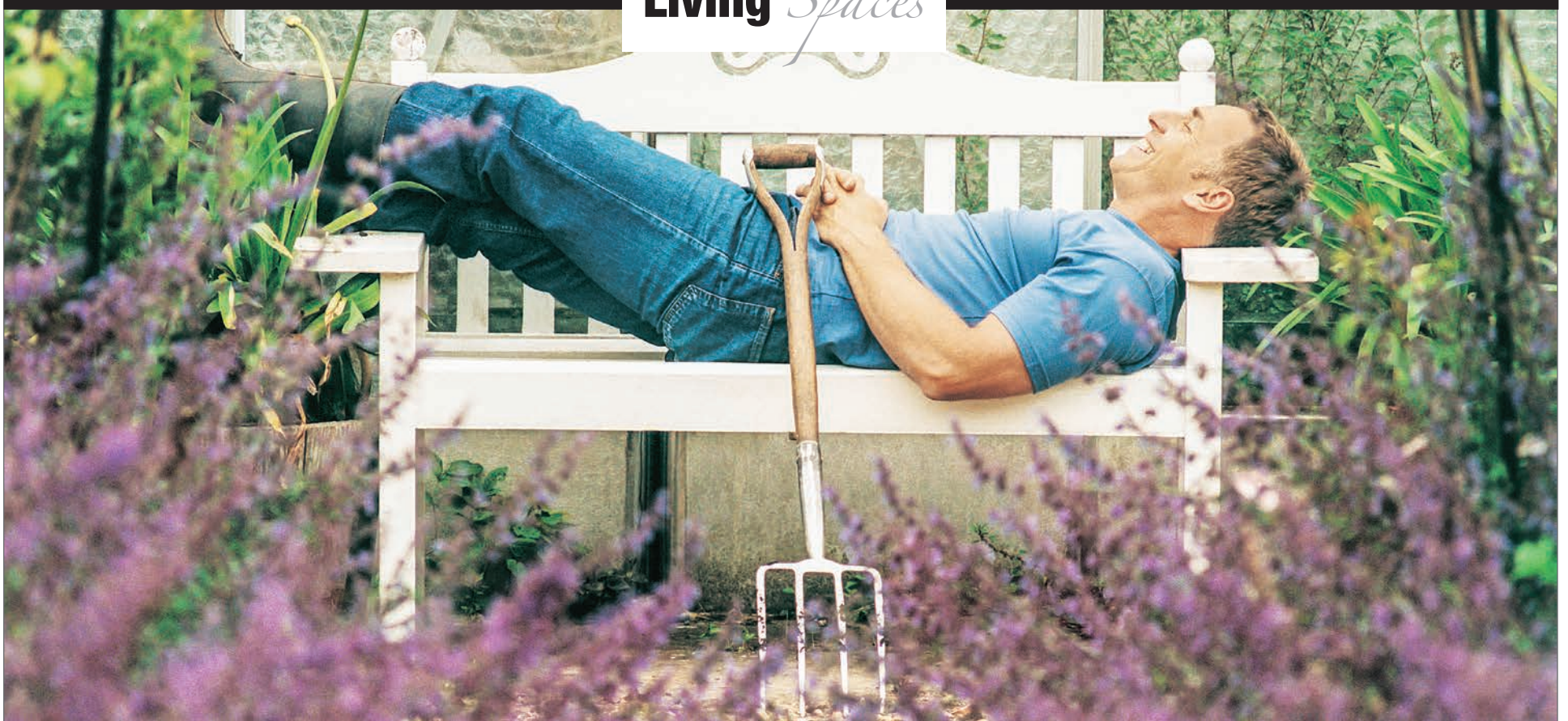


Living spaces

Home and Garden

A product of TurleyCT Community Publications | TurleyCT.com | May 2017

Living Spaces



Men who garden

Women aren't the only ones growing flowers

by Lynn Woike
Editor

While most garden clubs are comprised totally of women, some organizations formed around individual plant varieties have many men.

Steve Kovack was an honorary member of the West Hartford Garden Club until becoming a full

member about four years ago.

He is its only male member.

The Farmington Garden Club has none. Hill and Dale Garden Club in Glastonbury and the Avon Garden Club also have no male members.

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Living Spaces

said Jan Brigham.

Kovack said he grew up on a farm in Pennsylvania, with 200 chickens, three cows, some beef cattle and pigs – and an acre of garden that he began running when he was about 12. When he moved to West Hartford, he planted shade gardens around the house along with taking a community garden plot.

“I grow everything,” he said.

The reason he became involved with the club is because he was taking the master gardener course that required him to do a volunteer project. The West Hartford Garden Club was taking care of the Butler-McCook House and Garden in Hartford and asked him to develop a shade garden. It required him to clear away debris and rip out a lot of ivy, including poison ivy and otherwise “sawing through this forest.”

“The West Hartford Garden Club ladies fell in love with me,” Kovack said, adding that he could be the only man in the club because he thinks “a lot of men get intimidated.”

“In the spring I came back. Thousands and thousands of bulbs were in blossom. They had been dormant and so they started coming up. That blew my mind. I was part of this creation.”

Kovack went on to help plant

hostas and built a path through the woods.

“I tried to get other men to join, but they just didn’t. They just don’t want to be part of it for some reason. ... The men that I know don’t do much gardening and they’re all very independent.”

He thought perhaps it had to do with the socializing that goes on among women and men not wanting to be part of groups, yet he talked about the friendships that he has formed with a diverse group of men he’s gardened with in the community plot for years.

“The garden club is so excited about the community garden, they want to put us on their tour” for 2018, Kovack said.

Although The Gardeners of America/Men’s Garden Clubs of America lists no clubs in Connecticut, there is one just for men: the Men’s Garden Club of Wethersfield. It formed in 1956.

The November Richard Prentice moved into his new home, the gardens were dormant.

“In the spring I was overwhelmed with new growth and didn’t know what to do about it,” he said.

He attended the plant sale held by the club in May and became a



“The West Hartford Garden Club ladies fell in love with me.”

–Steve Kovack

member after that. Now he is the treasurer.

“Sometimes when I mention that I’m in a men’s garden club I’m asked if I’m gay. ... Maybe that’s why few men join. I’ve been to women’s club meetings. They are much more organized. That’s a problem,” he said.

The club belonged to the National Garden Clubs, but was ejected because of its men only membership. While the club hasn’t exactly forbade women to join, it hasn’t recruited women and one that was once sponsored by a member several years ago “got nowhere.”

According to its Facebook page,

the club devotes “its energies to the promotion of the full appreciation of gardening, landscaping and horticultural activities,” promoting “higher garden standards in the community for the benefit of individuals” and instilling “the love of growing plants in the hearts of children, particularly among those for whom opportunities are restricted.”

The club also promotes friendships, civic activities and a general interest in individual, private and community gardens, planting and parks.

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Living Spaces

of the Frank W. Weston Rose Garden, located adjacent to the town hall and library. Members meet Saturday mornings during the growing season to care for the beds. Its annual plant sale the day before Mother's Day draws crowds, both for the hanging baskets and vegetable plants, and also for the "home-grown," a large variety of perennials that have been split from members' gardens.

That's what hooked Fred Odell when he was 35 ... 38 years ago.

He'd done planting at his prior home, so when he saw a sign for the plant sale, he stopped.

"Man," he remembered thinking, "these were the friendliest guys I've ever met."

He ended up going home and getting some plants he'd been growing, bringing them back to the sale. That got him invited to the post-plant sale meeting.

"Within a year, I'm running the plant sale. Then I got to be president," Odell said.

He also became a master gardener.

At 72, he said he's one of the youngest members. Most are retired and older. While most are from Wethersfield, members also come from Glastonbury, Rocky Hill, Cromwell and South Windsor.

"We do enjoy solving problems when they arise. ... We try to help each other," he said, noting that seems to be what was behind the formation of the original group of men – some who were farmers and others in a variety of agricultural occupations.

"They had a group of guys who'd just chat. They were friends. It was very informal. ... They would meet at each other's houses once a month or so."

As more men joined, the club formed. Officers were elected, committees were formed and speakers were featured. Social events got added to the schedule.

Now, rather than corn and tobacco, conversations are more

likely to be about shrubs and lawns, said Odell, who estimated that a third of the club lives in condominiums, "and their gardening is far reduced from what it was, and they're not into homegrown so much anymore."

When the club formed, he said, "There were four or five other gardening clubs and presently there are three women's gardening clubs in town. ... Twice in my 30 years, females have inquired about becoming members, but it's an issue that kind of dies on the vine. It's not something that's on the top of our list. ... None of our wives want any part of us. They do their own thing."

"I'm in many other organizations, and women tend to be detail oriented, very thorough. Men are scattered."

While he said he's "never attempted to join any other garden club," for a while he was a member of the New England Hosta Society and, together with his wife, who he said is "much more of a gardener," he began

a garden club at the lake where they have a summer home.

Tom Mierzejewski and his wife, Jenne McDermott, love gardening and maintain a parklike setting around their home, but their real passion is orchids, which they use to decorate their home's interior.

He supported his wife in founding the Nutmeg State Orchid Society in 2008 – she as the president and he as the treasurer. Of its 200 members, nearly half are men – some who have joined with their wives and some who come alone.

While the median age is about 50, it's a diverse group in both expertise and in age, including a teenage boy.

Hearing most garden clubs have no male members, Mierzejewski was surprised and wondered how clubs went about recruiting members.

The Nutmeg State Orchid Society prides itself on making everyone feel welcome, he said, with name tags, emails and a welcome package. **WHL**

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Behold

Pops of paint colors in striking hues are all the rage

by Sloan Brewster
Staff Writer

A dramatic color can break a person out of the box. This year, the Benjamin Moore color of the year is a deep, dark purple shade.

"It's called 'Shadow,'" said Susan Cesana, decorating consultant for Maher's Paint in Avon. "This is a very deep amethyst sort of grayed down plum color."

In light, the shade emits the purple hue at its heart, but if there is no light, it comes

off more like a charcoal color, Cesana said. Dark isn't bad, despite what some may think.

"Sometimes you find that it can be a lot prettier and less horrifying than you think," she said. "You sort of assign more baggage to the word 'dark' than it ever earned."

Since the company debuted the color of the year last November, Cesana has sold it to quite a few customers, she said.

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Shadow can be used for an accent wall or even an accent piece, such as a piece of furniture.

"I have sold it to people who wanted to paint a little buffet just because they liked the color," she said. "I have sold it to people for accent walls, the powder room, or a piece of furniture."

It can also cover all the walls in a room, she said. It's the kind of hue that when used on all four walls in a room gives off a dark, moody ambiance.

She has seen it used in a dining room and while it was

used on all four walls, the room had lots of light with white trim in the room, some bright chrome or nickel decor and glass light fixtures.

"It was stunning," Cesana said. "It was beautiful."

It's also a good color for kitchens and dining rooms with wainscoting, which frees up the rest of the walls for a darker tinge.

She has also seen it used for walls along a wooden staircase.

If there is wainscoting along the staircase, that will break up the dark color. Another idea for breaking up the deep shade is to add pictures, perhaps black and white framed shots in a row following the stairs.

"[There are] all kinds of wonderful things," Cesana said.

Rarely would people think to use a color like shadow, but when they see it, they realize how many possibilities it has.

The color of the year, however, is not always a dramatic shade, but when it is,

"it helps break people out of their little box," Cesana said.

"Sometimes it's an off-white," she said. "Last year's color of the year was 'Simply White,' so it wasn't unique in any way, shape or form."

Still, folks were drawn to it, seeing a lot of white in white.

"It looked clean and bright," she said. "They hadn't seen that in a long time."

The whole point of the color of the year is to spark adventure, but that doesn't mean it's a whole new color.

"Frequently, they're historic colors that have been around for the whole 125 years that the company has been around," Cesana said. "As you know, there's no such thing as a new color. Colors have been around forever. They're just mixed differently."

Cesana recalled colors from other years in the three decades she has worked for Maher's.

Once upon a time warm shades of green and gold and mossy red brick colors were beloved.

Then the mood shifted to cooler shades, with grays and gray beige stealing the show.

It's not just colors that change with the times, the trends also impact how color is used.

For example, it's less common currently to paint each room a different color, according to Cesana.

"Rather than have each room a different color, more and more people are doing one or two colors

throughout, and one or two accent walls and accent colors," she said.

Cesana said she has never seen a customer come in simply to buy the color of the year because it was the color of the year or who picked the color for that reason.

Sure, they're curious about what the color may be, but then they buy whatever color best suits their desires or needs.

Sometimes, though, the color strikes their fancy.

"If they see a picture and it's something they wouldn't have thought of, it sparks creativity," Cesana said.

The color of the year reaches beyond the paint industry.

"The entire design industry is connected so that when you start seeing color combos even if you don't initially like them, pretty soon you see the same combos in fabric and clothing and throw pillows," she said. "All of a sudden you show up in Home Goods one day and there's this beautiful pillow sham that uses that color."

When customers ask Cesana for her thoughts, ideas or advice in selecting colors, she combines what's current and fun and reminds people not to take themselves too seriously.

"You want it to work for you," she said. "It has to maybe be dragging you out of your comfort zone just a little ... maybe expanding your comfort zone just a little." **WHL**



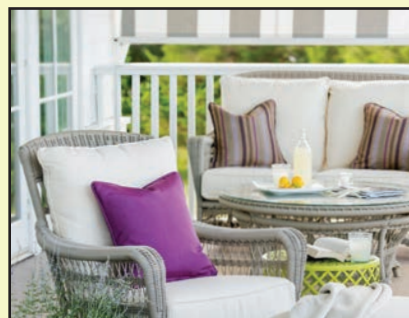
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Green tips for black thumb gardeners

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

As springtime rolls in and yards turn from muddy brown to fresh green, it can be challenging for those who have a self-described “black thumb” in the garden. With a few simple tips, however, those with gardening difficulties can start to get their plants in shape.

Before giving up completely on being able to garden, there are a few questions that should be asked.

“What exactly are you trying to grow? Are you basing it on one experience, or have you repetitively tried different plants in different areas?” said Don Woods, owner of Stonehedge Landscaping and Garden Center in Newington. “There’s usually a reason.”

Woods suggested that for some people it might be necessary to have their soil tested to make sure that it is hospitable for growing.



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Adding topsoil or compost could help to improve growing conditions.

"I would definitely recommend that they start from the ground up," Peggy Bosco, co-owner of Bosco's Garden Center and Landscaping in Simsbury, advised.

"You want to enrich your soil because that's where your plants get all their nutrients from."

For those who need to improve their soil, Bosco recommended using an organic topsoil as opposed to a synthetic one.

"Every time you dig a hole to put something in the ground, that plant is going to be there for years," she said. "Organic soil would build that base organically as opposed to keeping a synthetic product there."

Another large piece of advice from planting professionals stems from a common problem they have seen with clients.

"Number one, don't overwater," Bruce McCue, owner of McCue Gardens in Wethersfield, said.

While many plants simply require

water, soil and sunlight, too much water can be irreversibly damaging.

"The worst thing is overwatering a plant, actually, because once you rot the root system, you can't bring it back," Bosco said. "Overwatering tends to be worse than underwatering."

There are clues to look for that show a plant is being overwatered, including wilting when the soil is wet, brown leaves and rotting roots. According to Bosco, watching plants to see what they need is a crucial piece of gardening.

"The leaves and the plants will show you when they need water. They're talking to you, you just have to know how to listen," she said. "Everybody that works here is educated in that field. They would tell you how a plant shows you that it's thirsty."

Each of the garden professionals also stressed the importance of knowing what you are planting and where.

"Read the tags as to whether it goes in the sun or shade," McCue said. "A lot of people will put a plant for

shade in the sun and a plant for sun in the shade, and that's not a good environment for them to grow."

Bosco agreed looking at a garden or yard's specific conditions is integral to the success or failure of a plant.

"Plant the plant in the right conditions," she said. "You have to have the right plant not only for our environment here in the Northeast, but also for the conditions that you're offering."

The experts said that people should remain realistic about what they can plant, and the professionals at each of their garden centers can help guide visitors toward making the right choices.

"There definitely are plants that are easier to grow than others," Bosco said. "Native plants are typically easier. Once you start getting into specialties and perennials, those would usually need special fertilizers."

"If you're specifically looking at gardens, tomatoes are easy. If you're doing perennials, hostas are easy. Most trees and shrubs are relatively

easy to grow," Woods said. "It's really about proper depth and proper after-care."

Most importantly, all three of the plant experts encourage those who believe they have a "black thumb" to ask questions at their local gardening center.

"We have people here who can help with any of those questions," Woods said. "People can always come by and get help." **WHL**

Stonehedge Landscaping and Garden Center is located at 1616 Willard Ave., Newington. They can be reached at 860-667-1158 or online at www.stonehedgegardeningco.com.

Bosco's Garden Center and Landscaping is located at 1376 Hopmeadow St., Simsbury. They can be reached at 860-658-2428 or online at www.boscogardencenters.com.

McCue Gardens is located at 47 Hartford Ave., Wethersfield. They can be reached at 860-529-5967 or online at www.mccuegardens.com.



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Living Spaces

Sharing spaces

Experts say not to fear bats in the attic, help protect an important species

by Mara Dresner
Staff Writer

Bats have an image problem. Despite the fact that they're mammals (like us!), many people associate the creatures solely with Halloween, vampires and Bruce Wayne.

"Everyone cares about the charismatic animals, the pretty ones, the cute ones," said Cheri Collins, nature center coordinator at Eleanor Buck Wolf Nature Center in Wethersfield.

Jim Woodworth, stewardship chair of Great Meadows Conservation Trust, knows

first-hand how skittish people are around the creatures.

"Our family's relationship with bats at the 18th century brick house on River Road began the summer I began dating my wife, Kate, who lived in the house. That would be over 50 years ago. One night she felt a presence flitting around her bedroom, and when her mother responded to her cries and peeked into the bedroom, she yelled to her husband, 'My God, it's a bat!' and then shut the door on the bat and her daughter,"

Woodworth related.

After moving into the Wethersfield home almost 40 years ago, Woodworth and his family made peace with the bats.

"There was always evidence of bats living in the unfinished third floor, and each summer on a hot and humid night, they'd make an appearance downstairs. This would necessitate arming oneself with a hat and a tennis racquet, opening the windows and hoping to witness the bat flying out the window," he said. "As our older son reached fifth or sixth grade, we observed a bat in the attic and made an attempt to replicate the science films by tossing mealworms into the air while videotaping with a large old camcorder.

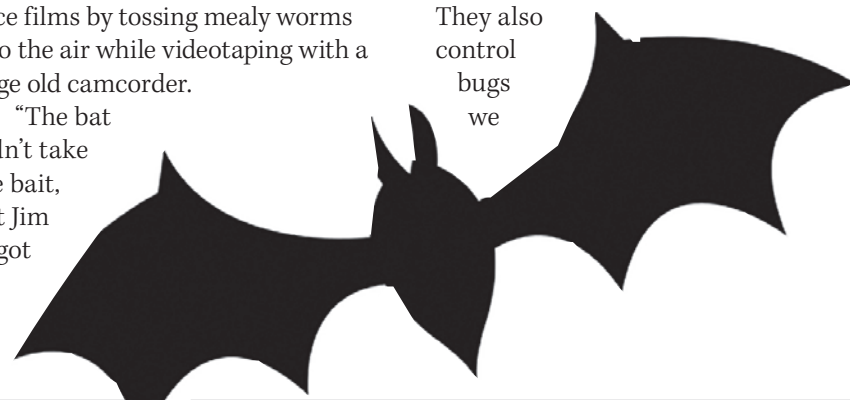
"The bat didn't take the bait, but Jim Jr. got

a good grade on his project. He went on to enjoy a summer internship studying the breeding habitat of bats in Arizona. They would catch bats at night in 'mist nets,' attach tiny transmitters to lactating females and then spend the day tracking the signals to, for example, a lightning blasted tree cavity."

Paying close attention to the bat population is wise, Collins said.

"We really do need our bats. They're one of the major controls of agricultural pests and help control the populations of the corn earworm and other pests that feed on our crops.

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don't personally like [such as] mosquitos," she explained.

"Bats are an important part of our food chain, especially when it comes to insect control. Some bats eat several hundred insects per hour and feed for four to five hours a night, so a good-sized bat colony consumes many thousands of insects nightly," said Jay Kaplan, director of Roaring Brook Nature Center in Canton.

Unfortunately, the bat population in Connecticut and many other states has been decimated.

"Bats in Connecticut have been subjected to the 'white-nose syndrome,' a fungus that originated in the mountains of New York state.

Recent studies indicate the fungus may have been brought from Europe by hikers. It has now spread through the East and is responsible for the deaths of many thousands of bats of several species. It matters because bats are so valuable in controlling populations of insects that may spread disease or damage

crops," Kaplan explained.

"The shocking drop in the population of bats will cause some very serious ripple effects. It may not hap-

pen soon, but it will happen," Collins said. "They control many agricultural pests, which will destroy many crops. One of the side effects of those pests not being controlled by natural

Protection, white-nose syndrome has killed more than 5.7 million bats since it was documented in New York in the winter of 2006-07. It is named for the white fungus – called

Pseudogymnoascus destructans and formerly known as Geomyces destructans – that is seen on a bat's nose and/or wings while in hibernation. At the end of the 2012-13 hibernating season, bats with WNS were confirmed in 22 states and five Canadian provinces.

Collins said that 95 percent of small bats in the Northeast has been lost since 2006. Each year, the WNS is spreading further west, and has even been found in Washington state, which she called "alarming."

"White-nose syndrome is a cold-loving fungus that we tend to find in places that are moist and 52-degrees Fahrenheit, which tends to be where bats are hibernating. It first appeared in 2006 in New York state. The supposition is it traveled in on the equipment or boots of a caver. It appears to be related to a European fungus, but there's nothing in our ecosystem to control that fungus and it took off," she explained. "It infects the animals and goes unto their lungs, into their bloodstream,

"There was always evidence of bats living in the unfinished third floor, and each summer on a hot and humid night, they'd make an appearance downstairs. This would necessitate arming oneself with a hat and a tennis racquet, opening the windows and hoping to witness the bat flying out the window."

–Jim Woodworth

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and causes them to be unable to hibernate. They go out in the winter to eat and there's nothing to eat and they starve."

There are eight species of bats in Connecticut, as of 2005.

"We've had to put more of our species on the state endangered species list. We [put that] status on four of them; four are severely endangered," Collins said. "These were very common previously."

For example, she said the big brown bat population has declined 40 to 50 percent.

"You usually see them flying around homes. They'll end up in the attic of homes," she said.

It's not just the current bats that people should be concerned about.

"Don't kill them. A number of people, as soon as they see a bat, they kill them. Bats only have one baby a year and if that one doesn't survive, that's it. There is one species that has twins. But they reproduce very, very slowly. For the population to recover, it will take a very long

time," she said. "The one thing we need to do is not kill bats. Do not go into caves in the winter because that's where they're hibernating. If there's a bat in your house or bats in your attic, call a nuisance wildlife control officer. They're licensed by the state. Ask them to come and help remove it humanely. If they've gotten into your house or attic, you need to find out where they're getting in and block that. They don't chew, so if you can block them out, they won't come back in. Mainly, you should not be alarmed if you see a bat. They're not interested in people at all."

Around August each year, juveniles start to go out on their own.

"They need to eat a lot before they go to hibernate in winter," Collins said.

Bats in the house

Woodworth is a fan of the creatures and has been pleased to occasionally encounter one.

"After the terrible white-nose syndrome decimated bat popula-

tions in the region, bats seemed to have abandoned the attic. However, in the last couple of years when my younger son and his wife took over the house, bats resumed their residence and their summer visitations."

He recounted a call last summer from his daughter-in-law to shoo a bat from the bathroom.

"Fortunately, the little brown creature held the position it had taken up under a shampoo bottle until I had time to open the screen, lift up the bottle, grab it and toss it out the window. It took flight and fluttered away," he said.

Woodworth isn't the only one who's looking out for the bats.

William Parsons, a masonry restoration contractor from Farmington, was working on The Linden in downtown Hartford when he realized that the work would displace bats.

"I was thinking I was depriving bats of a home, so I bought a bat house and put it five stories up," he said. "I think bats are wonderful

because I don't like mosquitoes.

I love spiders, too. I've always had an affection for spiders because they eat flies. Bats are a very helpful part of our ecosystem. ... The bat house I purchased and installed for around \$100 can hold up to 400 bats."

While this was the first bat house he put up, it wasn't his first encounter with the furry creatures. In 2001 he was working on a building in Barkhamsted, rebuilding the chimney.

"I couldn't go on the roof. It was a slimy, old slate roof and they were going to tear the roof down. They told me they had a broken window and there would be 700 [bats] leaving the building at a time. I go up on a ladder, a tall ladder, and cut around the chimney from the inside. ... We went up on a ladder to cut a circle around the roof and all of a sudden all 700 bats came out in the room we were in. It was like a Vincent Price horror movie. They started circling the chimney in like a doughnut vortex. Then it all calmed down and



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they left," he remembered with a laugh. "I'm no biological expert on bats. I've seen bats all my life. People have an inordinate fear of bats. There's nothing to be scared of."

He's not the only one trying to offer bats a home.

Rick Bailey Sr., store manager of Wild Birds Unlimited in Glastonbury, said the shop sells a number of bat houses in various designs and styles to help protect bats, the most common species of which in Connecticut are the brown and big brown bats.

"We have bat houses that start at 20 bats, 25 bats, 30 bats. We have one that will do 100. Our largest will hold 300 bats," he said. "They are community-based. They are going to hibernate in shelters together, live in houses together or wherever they have protection. Caves can hold thousands of bats. They'll be side by side in the cave."

Prices for the houses at Wild Birds Unlimited start at \$35.

"It is a shelter and it keeps them

out of the sun. Bats go dormant during the day. When you mount a bat house, you have to keep the area clear. At dusk you can actually watch them drop out of the bat house four to five feet before they fly," he said. "When you would see bats is at dusk, when the sun starts going down. That's when they'll leave their bat house or the area they're housed in. At dusk, they'll start hunting right away. They start feeding, start picking off the insects that are in the air."

There are a number of requirements for hanging a bat house so it will be beneficial; it's not enough to simply hang it from a tree.

"We recommend that they put them facing in a southeasterly direction, in front of a tree where it's opened and exposed, 12 to 15 feet high. It should get 10 to 12 hours of sun a day preferably. The bats like it warm. Basically, [the direction] is to protect it from a north-facing wind, storms that come out of the north. It gives it that southerly exposure and, yet, at the same time, protects from the north

wind," Bailey explained. "You put it up and you keep an eye on it, too. When colonies develop, you can actually monitor the babies. The parents will drop out of the bat house and go out and feed, and they leave the infants. You can check in [on the house] in that time frame. You shouldn't do that more than once a week."

It's rare, but once in a while, Bailey said that other creatures, such as bees, might try to set up in the bat houses. In that case, it's advised that you clean out the house. Many of the houses easily open for cleaning. Mostly, it's a set-it-and-forget-it operation.

Some people make watching the bats a nightly ritual.

"They'll have their Adirondack chairs set out at cocktail hour, then they wait for them to drop out of their bat houses," said Bailey, who noted the houses are just one part of the equation. "It gives them a place to be protected and to go and to prosper. If enough people do that, hopefully, with this white-nose syndrome, the professionals can get

a handle on that and they can begin prospering again. Right now, they need help."

Scott McBride, a jewelry designer in West Hartford, bought his first bat house last summer.

"When I moved into my home a few years ago, I had noticed that there were some bats flying around in the evening when I was grilling one night. I wasn't afraid, but rather intrigued. Our community is getting gobbled up by residential structures taking away the natural environment for these guys. I decided to purchase a bat house to give these furry guys a safe, protected home," McBride said.

He found a bright place to hang the house.

'Like tiny dogs with wings'

Many people don't like bats, but Collins said there's no reason to fear the creatures of the night.

"Bats are tiny. People have a tendency when something scares them to make it larger in their minds.



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Living Spaces

These guys are very little, like the size of mice. Their wing span is long, but they're little," she said. "They're cute. They look like little tiny dogs with wings."

She finds much to like about the creatures.

"They live very, very long. They're very intelligent. They're very good at problem solving. They don't see all that well, but they hear brilliantly. That's how they find their way around. Loud noises produce echoes and their ears interpret these echoes," she said.

If your knowledge of bats comes from vampire lore, she's quick to reassure that Connecticut's bats don't want to suck your blood.

"They have cute little teeth. We don't have vampire bats. Most of the time, they can't even break the skin," she said.

Which doesn't mean you shouldn't use caution if you find a bat in your home.

"Anything with a mouth has the potential to bite you if they feel threatened. Don't pick them up. Don't try to touch them. Even though they're cute, they're not pets. We have a Bambi-esque feeling about a lot of wildlife, that they're nice, sweet pets, and they're not. You have to use some common sense and caution," she said.

She knows her love of bats isn't the norm.

"I've always been attracted to species that other people don't like. I like snakes. I like spiders," said

Collins, who also likes traditional animals, such as cats.

She thinks that people will love bats if they just give them a chance.

Kaplan also would like to set the record straight about bats.

"There are so many bat myths that are just simply untrue. Bats do not get tangled in people's hair. They have nothing to do with vampires – vampire bats are found in South America and other tropical areas and do not live in Connecticut. Bats rarely have rabies; the estimates are one in a thousand. Although if one is bitten by a bat, the bat must be caught and tested as rabies is generally a fatal disease," he said.

Collins believes those with a preconceived notion about bats should look more closely.

"Maybe we're hard-wired to be afraid of nighttime things. Creatures of the night are scary. Religion latched onto night creatures as evil. ... It entered the folk consciousness and people are still afraid of creatures of the dark. They're unusual. They're out at night and that makes them odd. They fly and we don't, so that makes them odd; and they're not birds and that makes them odd," she mused. **WHL**

Learn more about bats, including how to construct your own bat house, on the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection website at www.ct.gov/deep/ or visit batconservation.org, batcon.org or batweek.org.

Bat facts:

1. There are eight bat species in Connecticut: Little Brown Bat (*Myotis lucifugus*); Big Brown Bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*); Eastern Long-eared Bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*); Eastern Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus subflavus*); Silver-haired Bat (*Lasionycteris noctivagans*); Hoary Bat (*Lasiurus cinereus*); Red Bat (*Lasiurus borealis*); Indiana Bat (*Myotis sodalis*)
2. The two most common bats in Connecticut are the Little Brown and Big Brown Bats. The six remaining species are less common and seldom seen.
3. In general, bats are not dangerous. Like any other mammal, they can carry rabies, although less than 1 percent of all bats are infected with the virus.
4. Bats do not get caught in people's hair. Bats that swoop near people are usually after insects such as mosquitoes.
5. A single little brown bat can eat 1,200 mosquitoes in an hour.
6. There are almost 1,000 different species of bats in the world.
7. Only three species of bats feed on animal blood. These vampire bats prefer to drink cattle blood and are only found in Latin America.
8. The smallest bat is the size of a small mouse; the largest, a fruit eater, has a 6-foot wingspan.
9. Bats have varied diets: 70 percent eat insects; many tropical species eat fruit or drink flower nectar; some bats even catch frogs and fish.

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How to plant a tree for successful growth



More sunlight and warm temperatures frequently inspire homeowners to spend more time in the great outdoors during spring and summer. Outdoor projects often top homeowners' to-do lists in spring and summer, with gardens and landscapes taking center stage. Planting more trees around the yard is one popular project that can improve property value and benefit the environment.

Why plant trees?

There are plenty of reasons to plant trees. Trees provide a natural form of shade, reducing air temperature by blocking the sun's rays. This can reduce reliance on air conditioning systems and make it more comfortable to spend time outdoors during the summer.

North Carolina State University College of Agriculture & Life Sciences says trees absorb and block noise and reduce glare. They also can trap dust, pollen and smoke. Trees also absorb carbon dioxide and potentially harmful gasses from the air. One

large tree can supply a day's worth of oxygen for as many as four people, while also storing 13 pounds of carbon per year.

Getting started

Visit a garden center or nursery and select a tree that will be hardy in your planting zone. Choosing native trees can increase the likelihood that the new tree will adapt to its surroundings. Also, inspect trees to determine if they're healthy before taking them home. Look for evidence of root girdling, which occurs when the roots circle around the perimeter of the container and surround the trunk. Trees should not have any dead or dormant branches.

The DIY Network suggests locating the tree where it can thrive. This means selecting a spot that can make it easier for the tree to grow tall and wide. Avoid planting near the house, where roots can crack concrete or asphalt, and always plant away from underground pipes.

Planting the tree

Now it is time to amend the soil. It's not enough to enrich only the

soil in the hole where the tree will be placed. Move out into a circular area beyond where the roots will start so that roots can expand and properly anchor the tree. The next method of success is to ensure that the tree has a large enough hole to contain the existing root ball and allow for roots to grow and expand. Better Homes and Gardens experts say to prepare a hole that is two to three times as wide as the root ball of the tree. Treat the root ball gently. If the roots are wrapped in burlap, remove the burlap or push it to the bottom of the hole.

Backfill the hole with soil and check that the tree is straight. Stake the tree to help it stay upright and straight until the roots anchor it more effectively. A layer of mulch around the base of the tree can prevent weeds and reduce water loss. Water daily for several weeks until the roots have fanned out.

It's best to leave trees be for the first growing season, only removing broken or diseased limbs. Resist pruning and shaping until the tree has survived its first growing season. **WHL**

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Finding the right fencing fit

Homeowners choose to erect fences on their properties for various reasons. Parents may find fences provide peace of mind during those times when their youngsters are playing in the yard, while other homeowners prefer fences for the privacy they can provide.

Whatever compels homeowners to consider fencing for their properties, those that have decided to install fencing will soon realize they have numerous options. Finding the right fencing material for your property requires considering a host of factors, including budget and personal style.

Aluminum

Aluminum fencing is ideal for those looking for something that's both ornamental and functional. Aluminum fencing may not appeal to those homeowners whose biggest priority is privacy, as aluminum fences are not solid

walls. But aluminum fences are typically low maintenance, and they can be effective at keeping both kids and pets in the yard. Aluminum fences painted with a rust-inhibiting primer may require even less maintenance than aluminum fences painted without primer.

Bamboo

Bamboo is a less traditional fencing option that may appeal to homeowners who want to do something that's both different and eco-friendly. Bamboo grows naturally, which should appeal to homeowners who want their homes to have as little negative impact on the environment as possible. Bamboo provides ample privacy and comes in various styles. Homeowners should consult with a fencing specialist before choosing a style so they can be certain they choose the most climate-appropriate option.

Chain-link

Chain-link fences may not add the aesthetic appeal homeowners are looking for, but they are relatively inexpensive, durable and functional. Chain-link fences are low maintenance, though homeowners looking for fences to provide some privacy may need to get creative if they install chain-link fencing. Planting flowers, shrubbery or trees near chain-link fences can add some aesthetic appeal and a little privacy.

Vinyl

Among the more expensive fencing options, vinyl can make up for that initial sticker shock thanks to its durability. In addition, vinyl fences require little maintenance, saving homeowners the expense of paying for upkeep such as repainting. Vinyl fencing comes in various styles, and homeowners can choose the style that best suits their priorities with regard to aesthetic appeal and privacy.

Wood

Of course, no discussion of fencing would be complete without mentioning wood fencing. Many homeowners love wood fencing because of its versatility with regard to design and color. The options are endless when it comes to crafting wood fencing, which also can be stained in any color homeowners prefer. Wood fencing can be designed not only for homeowners who prioritize privacy, but it also can be crafted for homeowners for whom privacy is not a significant concern. Wood is a relatively inexpensive fencing material, but the maintenance required to keep wood fencing looking great can sometimes be costly and time-consuming.

Options abound for homeowners looking to add fencing. Homeowners hesitant to choose a material and/or install their own fencing can consult local professionals to find the best fencing fit for a property. **WHL**

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The benefits of backyard

koi ponds

Koi ponds can make for beautiful additions to landscaped backyards or home gardens. While many people are drawn to koi ponds because of their aesthetic appeal, there are many additional reasons for homeowners to consider installing koi ponds in their backyards.



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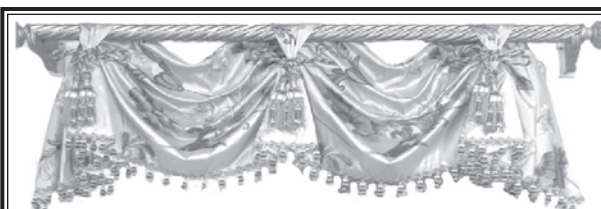
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Living Spaces

Ponds and water gardens can transform yards rather quickly. Ponds can add appeal to otherwise mundane yards and provide eye-catching, relaxing spots to sit and enjoy the scenery.

Koi ponds have recently fallen into a favor with homeowners in North America, but these popular water features date back several centuries to Asia.

Centuries ago, Chinese rice farmers began keeping carp in their rice paddies, and that practice eventually caught on in Japan. The fish started to breed and form slight

color variations. Koi, often referred to as "Nishikigoi," are actually descendants of the common carp, though the koi of today are more brightly hued and ornamental fish than carp.

Koi can become a low-maintenance family pet. These fish tend to grow accustomed to having people around, and will often interact with visitors at the surface of the water. It's not unusual to have koi beg for food or take food from a person's hand. They also may tolerate some light handling.

Another benefit of koi ponds is

that they create a miniature ecosystem within the yard.

When stocked with aquatic plants and other fish that can help keep mosquito larvae and other parasites at bay, they can sustain themselves quite nicely.

Ponds also can attract birds and beneficial insects, such as butterflies and dragonflies. By implementing straight vertical walls on the perimeter of the pond and setting up some natural barriers, homeowners can avoid unwanted predators from disturbing their koi ponds.

Koi ponds also provide some

psychological benefits. The sound of the water can be soothing and relaxing. Sitting by the pond may help alleviate stress, as unwinding next to a pond and watching the fish swim by can help individuals decompress.

Homeowners who have koi ponds may also benefit socially from these eye-catching additions to their landscapes. Homeowners may connect with others who share their passion for koi and water features. This opens up the opportunity to share the landscape and pond with others, building new friends and relationships in the process. **WHL**

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Writer's block

Walking wounded

by **Lynn Woike**
Editor

If you don't believe everything in the body is interconnected, hurt your knee.

I'm not even sure how it happened, but one day last month, I became aware of my right knee. A couple of days later, I noticed I couldn't bend it all the way. Stretching, doing a light workout, getting a massage should have helped.

Every time the knee seemed to be improving, however, I'd have a setback. There was the time I moved backwards and stepped on a cat toy. Another time I hit the dresser drawer I had just opened, and then I stepped off the curb wrong. Oh, and the hike up and down four flights of stairs to take photos for a story about the Heublein Tower surely that didn't help.

It wasn't long before it wasn't just my knee that hurt. The iliotibial band became inflamed and announced its anger by shooting pain up to my hip. There was enough left over to trickle down my calf and into my foot.

Walking turned into an ungraceful, jerky hobble that started to make my lower back hurt. Soon I couldn't stand for even a short period of time.

Favoring my right side forced the left side to do more of the work, which resulted in that thigh rebelling with painful cramps. Even my shoulders were tense from the stress the pain caused. All this gave me a dull headache as I found myself clenching my teeth.

I kept expecting a chiropractic adjustment, Advil and ice packs to be the cure they had always been, but I'm of Social Security age now and am

beginning to believe the warranty on some body parts may expire sooner than others.

Based on all the people I know with knee replacements, those seem to be among the first to go, along with shoulders and backs. I felt as if I had won the trifecta.

All this made it difficult to sleep, so at 2 a.m. I found myself surfing the web for cures.

There are anti-fatigue floor mats that could help when standing at the counter, stove or sink; orthopedic gel memory foam knee cushions; and hot and cold knee wraps. You can find magnetic knee supports, braces and joint relief compound formulas that, if you click on the CLAIM YOUR FREE SAMPLE link, you will be automatically enrolled in the Supplement of the Month Club from which you can never withdraw.

That's when I remembered that the placebo effect can be effective 50 percent of the time, so I considered putting jelly beans into empty pill bottles with a label proclaiming, "Faith Cure: take one three times a day with laughter."

That's because even more effective than placebos, it seems, is laughter. Studies have shown that genuine laughter is strong medicine – it releases endorphins that activate the same brain receptors as heroin and produce euphoria-producing effects. I have a great sense of humor, but despite wanting relief, there's nothing funny about pain that could make me laugh. Further reading reveals that some of the best laughter is that which you turn on yourself.

That's when I felt as if I

was slapped up side my head. A realization slammed into my brain, and I started to laugh – at myself – because I realized I was responsible for my aching knee.

I have had three different health care professionals prescribe a variety of exercises to help correct IT band syndrome. I have copies floating around at home and at the office to remind me to do the side leg rise, the clamshell, the side shuffle, the side-leaning stretch, the standing calf stretch and others. Things I'm supposed to do a certain number of repetitions or seconds two or three times a day.

When I had been doing them, all was well. Because all was well, the exercises didn't seem important and I found myself doing them only in the morning. Then I was doing them only a few mornings a week. And somehow, without any thought, I was no longer doing them at all.

I had to laugh because I was older but not wiser. I had more than placebo power. Just as I had surrendered to pain, I could conquer it.

Tentatively, I did a little stretch. And then another. Over a series of days, I did a series of gentle moves, and over those same days, the pain stopped increasing and began to ebb ever so little.

I'm still walking slowly with a noticeable limp, and as I write this, I have an ice pack affixed to my knee with a Velcro knee band.

I don't ever expect to run or use the leg press at the gym, but I do hope this time I will be wise enough to remain faithful to my stretches and strengthening exercises. **WHL**

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BY MARK DIXON
WFSB METEOROLOGIST [AMS]



Moon Nicknames

This month, the full moon – or the full “Flower” moon – falls on the 10th. Appropriately named as spring warmth triggers the blossoming of flowers. Native Americans started naming moons to help track the seasons. There was a lot of variability, between regions and tribes – at times leading to the same moon

having more than one name. Over time, the naming was streamlined and applied to the Gregorian calendar.

In January, there is the Wolf Moon as during the month wolves would howl out of hunger. Next, there is the Snow Moon in February, due to the snowy nature of the month. March has the Worm Moon, as the softening ground

allows earthworms to emerge. In April, there is the Pink Moon, not due to the color of the moon but of the ground phlox flower that becomes widespread during spring. June features the Strawberry Moon, as this is the time when harvesting of the fruit typically happens. In July, with bucks growing new antlers, it's the Buck Moon. August has the Sturgeon Moon, as it is the time to

best catch this fish. In September there is the Harvest Moon. With colder months ahead, the Hunter's Moon signals the time to hunt in October. The 11th month of the year has the Beaver Moon, corresponding to the time to set traps. Finally, in December there is the Cold Moon – aptly named for the longer nights and colder temperatures. [WHL](#)

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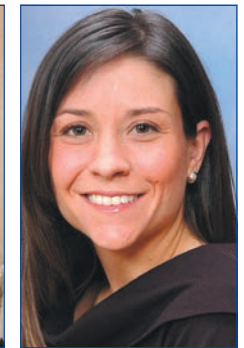
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